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Inspiration: Your Ultimate Calling

By Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

Chapter 13

Inspiration in Action

“In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.”
— Dag Hammarskjöld

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do . . .”
— Johann Wolfgang van Goethe

When we feel inspired, we’re on the “road to holiness” that Dag Hammarskjöld refers to above. Yet that road can only be paved with actions that mirror the intention of our originating Spirit—actions that we’re capable of choosing consciously, if we’re aware of the duality of giving and receiving.

Like two sides of the same coin, giving and receiving are inseparable. Other examples of our duality abound: Before we can take a breath, we must give a breath; in order to give anything away, we must first have been willing to receive it; and our ability to feed others is linked to being able to accept food ourselves. Who has ever seen a person with a front but no back? How about an inside without an outside? Or a magnet with a north pole but no south pole? So, just as the Prayer of St. Francis reminds us that *it is in giving that we receive*, in order to receive inspiration we must be willing to give it away, and vice versa.

Two Examples of Inspiring Action

As Goethe instructs, reading a book about inspiration isn’t enough, and certainly waiting for it to fall from the heavens into your lap won’t work either! Clearly, if you want to be inspired, you must be willing to offer inspiration. You’ve got to act on a desire to inspire others, thus becoming a person of inspiring action yourself. So in this section I’d like to share two beautiful examples of inspiration in action with you, along with suggestions for applying them to your life.

Example #1

I was inspired by a short documentary called *Ryan’s Well*, about a young Canadian boy whose actions made a huge difference in the lives of some people in Uganda. You see, as a first grader in the small town of Kemptville, Ontario, Ryan Hreljac learned that there were people in Africa who didn’t have clean drinking water—yet it would cost just \$70 to build a well that could provide pure, potable water for an entire village. This six-year-old boy began a campaign to earn

the necessary money, only to discover that the cost was actually several *thousand* dollars. His reaction was, “I’ll do more chores” . . . and he did.

In the film we see Ryan travel to Africa with his parents a few years later. The villagers greet him with enthusiasm and declare a day of commemoration that they call “Ryan’s Day,” in appreciation of his commitment to helping his fellow human beings on the other side of the world. It turns out that Ryan was instrumental in helping to raise what eventually grew to be more than *a million dollars!* His inspiration had motivated other schools in Canada to get behind his project; after the national news media picked up on the story, the television networks climbed on board, too.

Here was one small boy who decided to act on his strong inner calling to help others. He had no money or other resources at his disposal, but he *did* have a burning desire to reach out and serve people in need. He was willing to do the chores necessary to fulfill his call to be a vibrational match with his Creator and serve others. In turn, his actions created an immense wellspring of inspiration for all who contributed and got involved in Ryan’s foundation. He inspired the children in Uganda (and even the government and school officials in that country), who all paid tribute to the spirit within Ryan that did so much good (God) in a remote village far away from his small community in Ontario. Ryan himself was the recipient of even more inspiration than he gave away.

When I watched the film, I was so moved that I insisted that all of my children see it, and they became inspired as well. In fact, I’m writing these words with the admitted intention of inspiring others to take action, too. Ryan’s Well Foundation has a Website (www.ryanswell.ca), and with some inspired action, everyone reading these words can find their way to it and contribute to making clean drinking water, something most of us take for granted, available for others.

One person’s inspiring actions will ultimately lead to many, many others. In the duality of inspired actions, giving and receiving inspiration is a never-ending circle of living more and more in-Spirit.

Applying This Example: The moral of Ryan Hreljac’s story is that none of us has an excuse for not being a person of inspiration. We don’t need money or the help of any government or bank—all we need is an internal commitment to be more like God, and then to act on that desire. Everything else that we need will begin to arrive when we’re in-Spirit: The right people will show up, the financing will materialize, those around us will be attracted to our enthusiasm and commitment, and we’ll be a source of inspiration to others . . . while becoming more inspired ourselves.

Ryan’s story represents our true nature, and our ability to be purposefully in-Spirit. He found a way to give to others the inspiration he wanted for himself, and all those who observed this boy in action responded in kind. To that end, whatever *we’d* like in our life that would provide us with inspiration is there—we just need to find a way to offer to others what we desire, and we’ll solve the riddle of how to feel inspired and give inspiration away at the same time.

Example #2

On a recent airing of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, Cassie, a young cancer patient, was given a surprise by the show’s producers: They built a beautiful mansion where the tiny bungalow that housed the little girl and her large family once stood. But Cassie hadn’t written to

the show to ask for a more impressive home for her family; instead, she wanted the producers to consider making over the children's cancer ward in the hospital where she spent a large portion of her young life. She felt that the surroundings were far too dreary—the walls were bare, and the entire place was disheartening—and she felt that a makeover would help uplift and inspire everyone, including her young friends who were also patients. The show agreed to finance and re-create the children's cancer ward, and they also got all the kids involved in the project.

When it was completed, the ward looked like a fairyland that any child would love: Playrooms replaced old storage closets, the walls came alive with creative artwork, and the sleeping facilities were redone so that they no longer even resembled hospital beds. The entire ward turned into a place of inspiration . . . all thanks to the dreams of a very young child who listened to Spirit and took action. But I haven't even gotten to the most inspiring part of the story yet!

Without exception, all of the children in the cancer ward who participated in the renovation had their white cells increase in the direction of well-being and away from the damaging cancer in their bodies. Imagine—by moving more into harmony with Spirit and using this newfound inspiration to take action in the service of other children, the actual process of returning to perfect health was activated. The healing power within these young people somehow miraculously responded to the results and actions of Cassie's inspiration by increasing their white cells!

Applying This Example: There's so much to ponder in the story of Cassie's actions—above all, how taking action to inspire others may activate something that reconnects us (and them) to a stream of well-being and perfect health. Additionally, there's the inspiration that we receive by giving. Consider these powerful words of Robert Frost, one of America's most illustrious poets: "Something we were withholding made us weak. Until we found out that it was ourselves." Our weaknesses, including our illnesses, may come to us because we're withholding something—which could very well be our healthy, conscious connection to Spirit. By taking action to inspire others in any way, we gain the opportunity to convert a weakness to a strength.

If a child of five or six who's living with cancer in a ward with other kids in similar circumstances can find a way to take action that inspires others, then surely we can go within and find our way to inspiring action. Little Cassie was acting more like God than ego when she wrote to the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* show. And she also behaved in a more God-realized way when she got involved in the cancer-ward renovation to make it a more healing and good-feeling place. As one of my greatest mentors and teachers, Carl Jung, once observed: "Whatever you do, if you do it sincerely, will eventually become a bridge to your wholeness, a good ship that carries you through the darkness." Dr. Jung's key advice centers on the word *sincerely*, which I interpret to mean "in collaboration with our essential spiritual essence." By taking action from that place of Spirit, we become whole again, and all darkness dissolves.

Cassie and Ryan's examples are not out of our range, no matter who we are or what our place in life is. We *all* have the capacity to become inspired, to act in a more God-realized fashion—we just need to take the time to seek out the opportunities to do so.

How I've Practiced Inspiration in Action

In this section, I'd like to present some examples of my own deliberate efforts to put the duality of inspiration in action into practice. I work at this every single day of my life: Every human

encounter represents a moment of truth for me, one in which I choose to be reconnected to Spirit and offer to others what I genuinely want for myself. The opportunities present themselves in the form of a smile or a greeting or an extension of kindness, even if it's just a silent blessing to a person begging on a street corner or a prayer said quietly to myself when I hear a siren. (The siren is a reminder to me to offer my thoughts of comfort to whomever is in need of assistance.) These are habits that I've developed over a lifetime.

Then there are the days when I go out on a premeditated odyssey of inspiration, without any fanfare or need for recognition. Here's the result of one such inspiration excursion—and keep in mind that this all happened in one afternoon!

I reside on west Maui while I'm writing, and on this particular day I decided to make the 20-mile trek to Costco to load up with supplies for two weeks of uninterrupted writing. As usual, someone was standing by the roadside looking for a lift to "the other side." This is a commonplace occurrence here on Maui, and it's my regular practice to pick up whoever's seeking a ride—usually a young person with a surfboard or a couple with luggage needing transportation to the airport. I always view giving rides as an opportunity to serve another person, and I get to feel good as well. If you're thinking about how dangerous this practice might be, I simply don't ever entertain such thoughts, and I never attract people or events into my life that cause me harm. It's just not my way of being in the world.

On this day I picked up a 41-year-old man from Canada named Raven (Maui tends to attract people with names like that) who needed to get to the airport. As we talked, it turned out that my passenger hadn't spoken to his father in 17 years, distancing himself out of respect for his mother and sister, who had their own unresolved conflicts with the man. Raven admitted that he felt distressed and incomplete; moreover, he found himself repeating some of the behavioral patterns of his father's that had caused this family rift in the first place.

I brought up the subject of forgiveness, mentioning this quote from *A Course in Miracles*: "Certain it is that all distress does not appear to be but un-forgiveness." I related the story of my experience at my own father's grave in 1974, and how that one single act of forgiveness turned my life around and headed me back in the direction of Spirit.

As I dropped Raven off at the airport, he hugged me. With tears in his eyes, he said, "I can't believe how much this one trip has changed my life. I feel that you were sent here by God to remove this sword that's been hanging over my head. I know what I have to do, and I will do it soon." It was a moment of inspiration for both of us.

It would have been just as easy for me to maintain silence on that 20-mile ride along the ocean, but I knew that on this day, I was on a pilgrimage of inspiration, and Raven was one of my co-conspirators.

I headed back to Costco for one of my favorite activities. I love the opportunity to purchase large amounts of goodies of all description in the store's open, warehouse atmosphere, among lots of local people doing the same thing.

At the back of the store on this day, a gentleman who recognized me from my PBS appearances approached me and wanted an appointment to discuss a problem he was having. I informed him that I was writing a book, so a scheduled meeting would be impossible. But knowing that some force had brought us together in the midst of all this delightful chaos, I asked, "What's the problem?"

The man told me that he was a diabetic who'd developed a fail-safe method for delivering insulin, in a manner that would leave no one out. "So what's the problem?" I once again asked. "Why not implement your plan?"

He went on to explain how he'd been unable to get the necessary government agencies to meet with him—various layers of bureaucracy were impeding his progress. On and on he went with a litany of obstacles that he felt were being placed before him, until I finally stopped him. "I sense that you know exactly what's needed, since you're a diabetic, too," I said. "And you know exactly what needs to be done to implement your idea."

He lit up like a Christmas tree. Giving me a knowing smile, he said, "Exactly, but I can't—"

I stopped him cold, reminding him that when we focus on what we don't want, then that's what we'll get. We get what we think about, whether we want it or not. I then asked him to consider staying out of the "system of obstacles" altogether; he should go ahead with his plan, forget about what couldn't be done, and just do it without the assistance or resistance of anyone else. "If your plan is viable, then they'll ultimately come along," I reminded him. "Just do it, and stop trying to get the approval of a bureaucracy." And then I asked, "You know what to do and how to do it, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," he replied, "and I will. I feel as if this little meeting was arranged by God just for me today." After getting my second hug from a "stranger" in the past 30 minutes, the man pushed his shopping cart away with a newfound sense of inspiration. He'd returned to Spirit, where the idea of anything being impossible is . . . impossible! And I'd been able to extend some Spirit offerings to another.

Continuing on my way back to west Maui, I picked up a young fellow named Andy who was on his way to the Hard Rock Café. Fancying himself a Rastafarian rap artist, Andy had long dreadlocks and a strong inclination toward using marijuana as a stimulus for his music. As it turned out, he simply wanted to approach the manager at the Hard Rock to see if he could perform there on weekends. He was out of funds and without a plan—even his upcoming spontaneous audition had been purely a fantasy, since he hadn't contacted anyone at the restaurant for an appointment.

As we talked, I told him a story that my daughter Sommer had recently related to me. She has a little dog named Joey that she takes with her every day as she trains horses and gives riding lessons. Her friend Mimi had told her that Joey was a perfect example of a being at peace with God, and my daughter agreed. "Joey's mantra is: *Breathe in, breathe out, life is good,*" she said. "That's Joey all day, every day: *Breathe in, breathe out, life is good!*" Andy loved this story . . . so I asked him to give me a song using this theme as the primary lyric.

My car was suddenly filled with the sounds of a Rastafarian rapper pounding out a fast-paced lyric. It was sensational, and Andy was in heaven. By the time I dropped him off at the restaurant, he had his audition all planned, and he'd written his very first song: "Breathe In, Breathe Out, Life Is Good."

I handed Andy a \$50 bill, which inspired him to cry out in appreciation, and off I drove. It was a double dose of inspiration: Andy was aligned with Spirit by being a creator of his own music and feeling purposeful and confident, and I was experiencing heaven on Earth for being able to extend love and assistance to another person. And it was my third such gift in the past two hours!

Next I proceeded to a grocery store to pick up a few items in smaller quantities than were available at Costco. As I stood in the check-out line, I struck up a conversation with the woman behind me on the subject of raspberries. I was purchasing two half-pints of these precious little jewels to put on my morning bowl of cereal, and the lady asked about the price, which I hadn't noticed. She went on and on about how much she loved raspberries, but their cost was so outrageous—she'd never spend that kind of money, even for something she loved so much.

I responded by telling her about my happy memories of growing up in Michigan and picking berries as a young boy. To this day, raspberries are one of my very favorite foods, and I buy them whenever they're available. The woman could relate to my memories, since she grew up in Pennsylvania and used to pick the berries herself, coming home with red stains on her fingers and all around her mouth.

At the register, we saw that the baskets of berries came up as \$7.99 each. My new friend almost collapsed, but told me to “savor each and every one of those little treasures.” As I walked away, I reached into my bag and placed one of the containers in her hands and told her to enjoy them as a gift from me. This lady, who was counting out her change to pay for a single container of yogurt, was stunned. I finally convinced her that if she wouldn't accept them as a gift from me, she'd be depriving me of my own treat in knowing how much pleasure she was going to have relishing and savoring these little gems.

My new friend was obviously inspired by this unexpected expression of kindness to a “stranger.” I could see the gratitude and love in her eyes as she tucked the berries in her straw bag. I, of course, was right on track, enjoying my fourth occurrence of inspiration in action on the same afternoon. And much to my surprise, number five was evolving right in front of my eyes. . . .

In almost every aisle of the grocery store, I'd seen the same woman, dressed in flowery slacks and a bright orange blouse. As I approached the bakery to buy a loaf of olive bread for my daughter Serena's arrival the following day (she loves this bread!), the woman in the colorful outfit talked to me about a multigrain bread that *she* absolutely loved. “It's the best I've ever tasted,” she said in a heavy foreign accent. As I approached the cashier, there she was again, ahead of me, asking if I'd hold her place while she picked up some item she'd forgotten. Then in the parking lot, she stopped her car to allow me to enter the exit ramp. Finally, as I was driving home, I spotted her again! Her car was sitting by the side of a putting green—with the door open and the engine running—and she and a man were hitting golf balls on the green.

To me, this was more than a series of accidental encounters, so I decided to turn my car around and deliver a present to her. I pulled up behind the automobile and approached with an autographed copy of *The Power of Intention* in my hand. It turned out that this lady was originally from Poland and was on her honeymoon. She introduced me to her husband, and I gave them the surprise wedding present, for which they were most grateful. I have no idea what took place in their lives after I drove off—I can't tell you why she kept appearing over and over again, or if the book I gave them made any kind of a difference in their lives—all I can say for certain is that these newlyweds were very touched by my gesture, and I had my fifth gift of feeling connected to Spirit in one afternoon!

As you can see, the opportunities to reach into the lives of others in an inspiring way arise in countless ways, every single day. We can either act on these momentary impulses and feel inspired, or we can ignore them and stay in our ego-dominated world. I choose to act, for it makes me feel creatively alive, connected to good (God) and everyone else in the world.

Taking action is how we increase our connectedness to Spirit. If we're heeding our ultimate calling, we must be willing to act on that mission. We may believe that inspiration is something that arrives in some mysterious way that's beyond our control—or perhaps we're waiting for God to send us motivational signs—but it's clearly best to rely exclusively on our decisions to act in ways that will intensify our awareness of Spirit.

Try this action plan for a few weeks and see if you don't feel more inspired than you've ever felt before.

Some Suggestions for Putting the Ideas in This Chapter to Work for You

Before beginning your day, spend a few moments with God during the early morning. When you awaken, remind yourself, "These are my few moments with God." During those precious seconds, ask, reflect, feel the peace, and most important, extend your gratitude. I end my few moments with God every morning with this: "Thank You, thank You, thank You!"

Upon awakening, decide to do something, anything, that will improve the quality of life for someone, without seeking any credit for yourself. (If you can do it before breakfast, great!) A letter, some flowers, a contribution, an unexpected plan to visit someone later in the day—do anything at all that will make someone else feel good (God).

Overcome your inertia. Since to be inert is to be without action, agree to become a being of movement: Plan to exercise, make that call you've been avoiding, or write that letter. Just as the key to Spirit is movement, the key to health is circulation. Spirit is always in a state of creation, so commit to less lying or sitting around and more movement.

Listen to your inner voice and promise that you'll take corrective action. For example, if you've been addicted to alcohol or drugs, overeating, or being a doormat, listen to that inner voice that begs you to be big rather than small, and take one corrective step. Just for today, throw the cigarettes away, pass on the sweets, walk around the block, or stand up for yourself. That inner voice is God pleading with you to rejoin Him in-Spirit by being pure, strong, and an instrument of well-being.

Accept no excuses: Stop with the BS and be truthful with yourself, admit your flaws rather than defending them, and look in the mirror and talk to yourself honestly. Affirm: *I am a creation of God, and I am Divine. I've forgotten this, but now I'm not accepting excuses. I'm going to stop fooling myself and work at being all that I was destined to be.*

Experience the apprehension and *do it anyway!* It's the doing that brings you to a new level of inspiration, so don't deny your fear. Allow the panic to come, and then move in the direction of facing it. Visualize the fear right in front of you. Stare it down and tell it how you truly feel and what you intend to become: "I'm stronger than you. I have my Creator here with me as a Senior Consultant, so I'm no longer willing to allow you to have dominance in my life. I'm scared, but I'm also taking action."

Look for opportunities that you're going to create to feel inspired. In my afternoon of inspiration described in this chapter, I made a specific decision to act in-Spirit. It was my choice. I was seeking those situations, and if they hadn't transpired, I would have made them happen. Once you get proficient at manufacturing circumstances that allow you to be inspirational, you'll begin

to see these situations materializing all around you every day.

Finally, don't ever quit. Never give up on yourself or feel shame as a result of not fulfilling your objectives to be a being of inspiration. Every fall that you take is a gift, and every relapse is a glorious opportunity—after all, without them you can't manifest the energy to get to a higher place.

There it is—a blueprint for taking action to live from inspiration. These strategies, as simple as they may seem, will bring you to a new level of inspiration if they're just adopted one day at a time. But reconnecting to Spirit *can* all happen in one day—this day. As one of my favorite Chinese proverbs reminds us:

*I hear and I forget
I see and I remember
I do and I understand.*

If you want to understand inspiration, it will require some doing. So remember what the Dalai Lama says: "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

I close Part III of this book with the simple yet profound words of Shakespeare: "Action is eloquence."

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