

# Born of the Spirit



It came to me that what it means to be born of the Spirit is glaringly obvious. And that however obvious it may be, living it is difficult. And it is difficult because it requires a level of trust that is rare. It is rare because for most of us in the Western world that trust has been broken. The break is not only in our personal lives. It is passed down to us from an entire ancestry. This ancestry, including, our own histories

is in need of healing.

The basis of living in Spirit is the embodied sense that we are being supported by creation, Earth, Spirit. This is in contrast to what Paul talks about as “sarx”, which is translated as the flesh. But he doesn’t mean the physical body, which he calls soma. The flesh is the cluster of drivers that are focused exclusively on security, status, and sustenance. There is nothing wrong with these drivers, in and of themselves. Without them we couldn’t survive.

But an essential human experience of awakening is that we can trust that we will be provided for, that the universe is “rigged in our favour” (Rumi). When we have experienced secure attachment as children, and when that period of secure attachment is followed up by successive environments (family, school, university, work, social communities, political institutions, etc.) that are motivated by a deep love of humanness, creation, and of the sacred intelligence in which each is participating, we are liberated to follow what is in our heart, what is our soul’s calling. Which is to say that we are able to transcend the drivers of the flesh, awaken to the dimension of Spirit, and live in trust.

At a feeling level, the alternative to trust in creation, Earth, Spirit, is anxiety—a crippling sense that I am not safe, that I must be vigilant in getting my needs met, that I can't depend on anyone or anything outside myself. In this state of anxiety I become a net taker, hoarding to myself and my family what I believe is necessary for survival. Other people, institutions, Earth, and even Spirit, becomes little more than resources – means to the all-consuming end of making sure I'm safe and cared for. You can tell from this description that I have just described the vast majority of our social, political, and economic institutions. At a personal level, my career, my spouse, my friends, all end up serving “the flesh”, the realm and organizing principle of anxiety.

The journey back to living from Spirit (which is always, already present and always, already supporting us) involves take a good, long, and hard look at our “trust issues”. And this means being willing to make all the trauma in our lives conscious. Trauma here just means those experiences in our life that have triggered the condition of anxiety, and our compensation patterns, such as hyper-vigilance, fear of intimacy, separating soul and career, doing what's expected of us rather than living from soul, all the ways that we disassociate or disappear under stress—effectively, all the ways we live in fear.

The challenge is that we are all mesmerized by what Charles Tart called “the consensus trance”.



Diego Rivera, "Chester Dale," 1945, oil on canvas. "From Impressionism to Modernism: The Chester Dale Collection" will be at the National Gallery of Art from January 31, 2010-July 31, 2011.

We have normalized our various compensation patterns, at a personal level, but also the ways these patterns are embedded in the social institutions. But as Bruce Cockburn puts it, "The trouble with normal is it always gets worse".

Think of North American politics, wherein a politician can be elected simply on the basis of claiming to deliver more economic security, lower taxes, etc. Everybody just blithely accepts the mantra, made famous by Clinton, "it's the economy, stupid". This is a politics of anxiety. Or think of how universities increasingly are seeing themselves vocational institutions, serving the needs of the economy, rather than seeing themselves humanizers of humanity. Here in Canada, the [University of Calgary](#) is under investigation for being influenced by the financial support of Enbridge. The University President is receiving \$130,000.00/year to sit on the board of Enbridge.



But this is merely a symptom of this larger issue of having an entire society organized around the “concerns of the flesh”.

The underlying anxiety that is driving us, personally and collectively is fuelled by an addiction to caffeine, which supports an unnatural pace of

life. We live at anxiety’s pace, not the soul’s pace. Again, we have normalized this collective addiction. We legalize alcohol, which anaesthetizes us to this anti-soul way of life. But we ban various sacred plant medicines, which can actually have the power to build new societies of love.

And this is what it ultimately means to be born of the Spirit, to stabilize in an orientation of love, for creation, for each other, and Love itself. The deep peace that comes from loving Love in all ways and in all circumstances, to be with others who are share this yearning and this experience of being suffused by Love. And then, choosing this moment by moment. Dropping into a resting and a trusting that this Love has got our back. It’s a matter in the beginning of “dropping out” of the cultures of anxiety, and subsequently discovering that you can “drop in” to the Spirit at any time. And it does requires a surrender, in order to allow Love to completely reorganize your life, inside and out. This comes from the realization that nothing else really matters so much. And that it isn’t a sacrifice of life as you know it so much as it is re-mem-bering of life as it could be.