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Ahhh! Winter Solstice! And a very Happy New Year too.

In 2006 His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who calls Lama Surya Das the American Lama, said to an American audience, "It is not enough just to meditate and pray, which are always good things to do, but we must also take positive action in this world." [This comes, as does the piece on 'generosity' from **Buddha Is As Buddha Does: The Ten Original Practices for Enlightened Living** by Lama Surya Das. Published © 2007, Harper Collins Publishers, N.Y., N.Y.]

'Generosity,' like 'Gratitude' is a concept I journey on this time of year.

On page 33, Lama Surya Das writes:

"WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH GENEROSITY?"

Right now, take a few moments to review your past in terms of the generosity you've received and bestowed. Ask yourself the following questions and note the first images that come to mind. Strive to make this a routine practice each time you feel blessed by someone's generosity or challenged to be more generous yourself.

- When have I especially appreciated another person's act of generosity toward me? How did it feel? Why did I appreciate it so much? How did I respond? Try to feel some gratitude for these kind benefactors.
- When have I been especially generous to others? How did I feel? Why? What charitable cause or causes could I support better now?
- What individuals and groups of people do I find it hard to think compassionately and open-mindedly about? Considering each individual and group separately, why do I experience this difficulty? How might I work toward overcoming it?
- Thinking of individuals in my life now, what gift would I like from them? Why?
- Am I usually on the giving or the receiving side of relationships? Have I realized that true generosity includes both giving and receiving, just like breathing in and breathing out?"

What light this time of year! Light into ourselves, as the days become longer from Solstice forward. Lightness in word and practice, as the snow reigns in Colorado, though some scientists at NCAR say that we will be living in a desert within ten years. And as Mars and Mercury are each in retrograde... Dig deep, my friends! Especially through February 15th.

On November 12, 2007, a very unusually gifted and generous SPIRIT left this third, fourth and even fifth dimension, we are living in. His name is Slim Spurling. He left his physical body and the ceremony reminded me of when Yogananda passed. I dedicate this "Holy Day" mailing to Slim's generosity of Spirit, knowledge of alchemy and sacred geometry and his awesome shamanic way. A true Medicine Man among the tribes; an Ambassador!

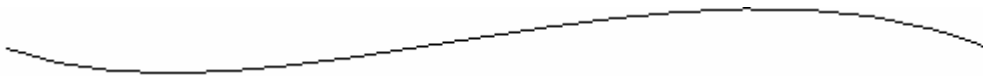
I chose this paper with cardinals, moving water and birch trees in Slim's memory. Many blessings to his wife Katharina and the staff at IXEL. May we have many more years together of passing Slim's 'generosity' on to the world we know and the worlds we've yet to uncover.

As I am studying and journeying with elements in my environment, I refer to **NATURE-SPEAK: Signs, Omens & Messages in Nature** by Ted Andrews. [© 2004 by Ted Andrews, published by Dragonhawk Publishing, Jackson, TN.]

On page 259, in the dictionary of shrubs & trees, he writes:

"To the Native American, the birch tree was source for canoes and snowshoe frames. The canoes could carry twenty times their weight, and their appearance as a sign reminds us that we can carry more if we maintain balance in life....

...The birch tree reminds us that new dimensions are opening for us. As they do, balance is necessary for the greatest success in entering them. She awakens the energy of new beginnings and a cleansing of the past."



There is a story, a true story, that many of you have asked me to put in writing. **A MEDICINE FOR THE EARTH** story:

On January 3, 2003 my ninety-six year old Mother came to Colorado for the last time. In the rehabilitation center in Boulder in a private setting not unlike her own living room, she said to me, "Get that speech therapist in here."

That particular evening, the therapist was available. The three of us sat knee-to-knee.

Mom said, "The soft food is awful. My daughter is missing her work. I want to start that program she helped set up."

My Mother entered Hospice within 6 hours.

"Honey, go away."

After much processing, I left to help in the facilitation of the 'filming' of our Medicine for the Earth Conference. As it was meant to be, I was in the circle at this transfiguration ceremony.

I cut the cords with my Mother, with all those present, then left the next morning for Chimayo, then Abuguiu.

Upon arriving at my lodging, the phone rang as soon as the key was in the door.

"Your mother has suffered a major stroke and is not expected to live through the night."

I left the warmth of the fireplace to go outside and sit on the ground at the base of very old, large willows. Thanks to my readiness and training I asked for my Mother's and my own Ancestors, genetic and/or spiritual, to come to our aid. I rattled in the wind, the cold and snow for a time.

The next morning, my Mother with low pulse and blue skin had a cell phone put up to her ear. "Mom, I love you," I said.

She sat straight up in her bed with witnesses and friends, got color in her face and said, "Honey, it's time for you to go back to work."

I hung up, called Pagosa Springs and cancelled my talk and workshop scheduled for the following days.

At 2:00 AM on March 13, the phone rang in Pagosa, as I followed through with the trip to the hot springs...

"Karen, your Mom passed tonight, very peacefully."

It was at 2:00 AM when I got the call.

"She and her nurse were in her bed. You know, M. She lifted Carolyn into her arms and sang to her. Your Mom went to sleep again. She was quite purple."

Are you all right?"

Me, "Moan. I guess."

"I heard a very special moment happened while you were on a business trip. In fact, stories are going around the Core Hospice Group.

Are you there? Is there anything I can do right now?"

Me, "NO THANK YOU."

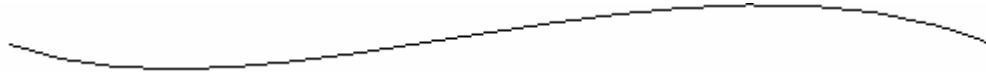
"What will you do for the next few days?"

Me, "Rest, go to the hot springs."

When I returned home, I met with the funeral director to make arrangements. My Mother's body was stored at a funeral home in Massena, N.Y. that happened to be right next door to the house she had been born in.

She was buried on Mother's Day with a very small service, next to my father on her family plot.

An interesting event to note: My Aunt Mary went into cardiac arrest at the time I had entered the chapel in Chimayo. Her daughters revived her and she lived two more years.



As 2008 is now here I encourage you to get political – and vote! Enclosed are the workshops that are booked. We will be adding more, so check out karenriceking.com periodically.

Have the best year ever!

Love, Light and Laughter,

Karen