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# *The Art of Receiving*

## PART I

MAYAN REVELATION NO. 267

*Receiving Gifts*

*Receiving Friendship*

*Receiving Services*

*Receiving Love*

*Affirmation*

Beloved Perfectioner:

In this lesson, and the one to follow, we will take up the study of "The Art of Receiving".

The material has been arranged in two parts, in order that we might do justice to this discussion, for we believe that your understanding of it is of the greatest importance to you.

This lesson, Part I, should be most helpful to you, for it sheds new light upon how we can find greater happiness through receiving gifts, services, friendship and the love of others. Your next lesson, Part II, will explain how the Art of Receiving can enrich your life as you receive precious gifts from Nature, from books, and from God.

As we begin our study, you may be prone to think that this is a strange subject to demand our attention. Certain questions will immediately come to your mind. You will want to ask, "Isn't giving more important than receiving? Doesn't happiness come by sharing?" These are good questions, and your instructor will endeavor to answer them in another lesson. In this study, we will consider the art of receiving graciously.

A frail little lady greeted me one morning. "Wouldn't you like to go into my garden and pick a bouquet of nasturtiums for your desk?" she asked. To myself I thought, "Would I? Most certainly not! I have a pressing engagement, and no time for delay. And I don't like the smell of nasturtiums, anyway!"

But what was I to say? The woman had planted and tended her garden with loving care. Now her knees were bothering her, and she found it painful to stoop to pick the flowers. If I replied, "I'm too busy to stop now," she would excuse me, but the blossoms might fade before anyone could enjoy them. If I said, "I really don't like nasturtiums on my desk for I can't bear the smell," I would be speaking the truth, but at the same time would cast a cloud across the dear

lady's sky.

The poor woman didn't have much she could give to anyone. She offered me what she had. I accepted, stopped on my busy way, and expressed thanks for the bright, pungent blossoms. As I walked away I noticed that her eyes were shining. She was happy because her gift had been accepted.

The satisfaction was not all hers. I had left home oppressed by the number of matters which needed attention that morning. After the brief delay my load seemed lighter. Some of the woman's simple joy had filtered into my mind; some of the shine in her eyes must have been reflected in my own.

Study this lesson carefully. Master the art of receiving, and claim new joys for yourself. There will be instruction not only in how to accept gifts, but in how to receive services, and friendship, and love.

The art of receiving is neither simple nor easy. If you rely solely upon your own insights you may soon become discouraged. Faith in God as the source of all wisdom and strength will help you with this lesson. Pray from your heart:

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#### PRAYER

Dear Father, Save me from smugness, or from feelings of superiority. Keep me aware of the heart-longings of others. Show me when I can bring happiness by accepting the generosity of those who seem to have little to give. Let me find true joy in receiving as well as in giving. Amen.

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#### RECEIVING GIFTS

**D**O you find more joy in giving than in receiving? Most mature people do. That is no reason why you should neglect an art that is much needed in our world - one that will bring you unexpected pleasure. Because Americans are so richly blessed - blessed by a national heritage and blessed by abundance - young people are tempted to take for granted much that is given them. Those of us who are older tend to scorn as unimportant much that we receive, or which is offered to us. It is difficult to learn how wisely to receive gifts.

The history of the Mayan civilization in Yucatan is blotted by the successive invasions of the Spaniards. They were cruel, destructive, and greedy. The nobility of the Mayans is evidenced by their refusal on many occasions to give themselves to hate. They might have exterminated several of the invading armies, yet they did not do so. Instead, they offered gifts to the Spaniards. Often the gifts were priceless, but the Spaniards scorned the generosity. The gifts only whetted their appetite to grasp more.

As the ages passed by, the Spanish civilization ebbed and died. As a great nation, Spain lasted only about four hundred years. Perhaps one key to her

fall was her inability to receive with appreciation the gifts which were offered to her.

It is difficult to accept graciously from those who have less than we have. I recall a day when, traveling abroad, our boat stopped briefly at a small port. It was evening, and the banks were closed. I attempted to use an American dollar to purchase an ice cream sandwich. To my amazement the shopkeeper refused my money, but insisted upon treating me as his guest.

How could I, who lived in comfort, accept hospitality from a man whose family lived in poverty? This was a challenge. Somehow, by gesture, I expressed overwhelming gratitude for the man's generosity. He became expansive, and I could see that his satisfaction was beyond measure.

While I have forgotten many meals for which I paid in cold cash, I shall always remember the ecstatic joy of that moment. Now, when tempted to insist that in some way I pay for what I receive, I recall that there is a coin of the spirit which often surpasses even the American dollar in value.

You will frequently find yourself in a situation where you are called upon to accept a gift from an individual less fortunate than yourself. Perhaps a neighbor who has a large family offers you vegetables from his garden. You know the man has a struggle to keep his table supplied, while you have more than you require. Forget for the moment that you have much and he has little. Think only of the impulse which prompted him to share the little he has. When you are able to do this you have learned the first lesson in the art of receiving. THINK OF THE SPIRIT OF THE GIVER. Put into second place the consideration of what use you might make of the gift.

Then, can you accept his gift without speaking about your abundance, or about his need? If so, you have learned the second lesson. SPEAK WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION. Let no word come to your lips that may suggest your superiority.

Finally, can you fully enjoy what is given, - enjoy it doubly because it is the result of another's labor, not your own? This is the third lesson in the art of receiving. TAKE DELIGHT IN ALL THAT IS GIVEN TO YOU. Let ripples of joy run through your mind and heart because someone cared enough to give you something, perhaps something he could well have used for himself and his family.

Now take a moment to review these fundamental principles in the art of receiving. Fix them firmly in your mind.

Think of the spirit of the giver.

Speak with sincere appreciation.

Take delight in all that is given to you.

Apply these rules every time someone brings you a gift. New satisfactions will brighten your days as you learn to receive graciously, and to appropriate for yourself the joy that comes to one who has learned the art of receiving.



## RECEIVING SERVICES

**T**HE next step is to let these three principles guide your behavior when an individual wants to render you a service. Here, too, you must be on guard against a feeling of superiority. You must put forth special effort when you feel capable, and the one who wants to help is unskilled.

If you have been taking pride in your self-sufficiency your life will be enriched, and you will discover a new source of happiness when you learn to accept help graciously. Find pleasure in the things others do for you, as well as in what you do for them.

Look for a minute at a homely example. A child said to his mother, "Let me wash the dishes." The woman brought a stool to the sink and showed infinite patience as five-year-old Billy dawdled over the task, even though she knew she would have to scrub some of the pans a second time. As mother and son worked together the rapport between them increased. The child felt he was making a contribution. This made him an important part of the family. The mother experienced a glow of satisfaction because she had welcomed the clumsy assistance of an eager helper.

If a child offers to help you, let him, even though you can do the task more quickly yourself. If he brings you a smudgy finger-painting don't set it aside as worthless; admire it, and perhaps hang it on the wall. Remember that your words of appreciation are not for the gift, but for the spirit which prompts ~~the little one to bring it to you.~~

An aged aunt lived with her nephew and his wife. She was feeble, and seldom went outside the house. The only thing she could still do well was to knit and sew. One day Carol, the teen-age daughter in the family, said, "Auntie, will you shorten my new skirt for me?" The daughter liked to be independent, and was capable of caring for her own clothes, but she knew that the aunt secretly felt she was a burden to the family, and never was as content as when she was sewing or knitting for others. Carol had learned how to practice the skill of giving joy by receiving.

Do you feel self-sufficient? Are you one of those people who has everything he wants of a material nature? It is a mark of greatness when you can, in such circumstances, receive little gifts and kindnesses with genuine appreciation.

A former president of the United States has this quality to a marked degree. I know a little girl who will always prize a letter she received from General Eisenhower when he was in the White House. Without telling her parents, she had sent him a crude painting of cows on his farm in Gettysburg. Her parents were embarrassed, knowing that her "paintings" were little more than daubs of color on paper. Yet, Mr. Eisenhower wrote her a personal letter of thanks for the gift, encouraging her to enjoy working with paints as he enjoys putting scenes on canvas.

Claim for yourself the satisfaction that comes to one who has fully learned the art of receiving. There will be times when it is not enough merely to gratefully accept what is offered. You must find opportunities to actually set the stage so an individual who longs to feel needed can do something for you.

When the help you are considering is not something tangible, but a form of

service, you must first apply the principles which were stated earlier in this lesson.

Think of the spirit of the giver.

Speak with sincere appreciation.

Take delight in the help that is given.

Then you must add another rule:

Create situations in which others can be of service to you.

This is important if you have an acquaintance, friend, or neighbor, who is young and insecure; or one who is old and helpless; or one who is handicapped and lacking in self-confidence. It is important that you associate with those who are less skilled. Your home is the place you should begin to practice the art of graciously accepting help. Then carry your effort into school, the neighborhood, or your place of work. You will warm the hearts of those who are tempted to feel they have little to give, and in so doing you will find your life enriched beyond measure.

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#### RECEIVING FRIENDSHIP

**P**EOPLE often come to me for help, saying, "I'm so lonely!" Perhaps you are lonely, too.

The Ancient Mariner cried out, "Alone, alone, all, all alone." This cry is echoed in many hearts, not only by those who live alone, but by those who work in a business, or live in a neighborhood in which true communication is difficult. Often the sense of aloneness comes because a person refuses gestures of friendship.

I recall the intense mental anguish of an invalid I knew. She had sold her home and moved into a small apartment. The furniture was too big for the rooms, and there was too much of it. When I entered there seemed hardly room to move about, yet this sense of being physically cramped was nothing compared to my feeling that the woman who lived there had shriveled spiritually.

As the woman spoke, she revealed her pent-up resentment. She bragged that when her minister had come to call she had taunted him by saying, "When did I see you last? Was it Christmas?" Her son's wife at one time had driven several miles each week to visit her and bring her gifts. She came less and less frequently when the woman railed at her from the moment she entered the door until she left. During the last months of the invalid's life one after another of her friends deserted her. The reason was evident; every expression of friendship had been rejected.

Of course this is an extreme case, but it points out the cause of much of the loneliness in the world. Some people, even when longing for friendship, do not show appreciation for the kindnesses of others. There have been times, no doubt, when you have failed to respond when a friend tried to render a service, or spoke the words which might have drawn you closer to him.

Invalids are often lonely. Old people are often lonely. Strange as it may seem, young people, and those in the prime of life, are often lonely, too.

A senior at a university was as desolate as anyone I have ever met. His friends said he erected a wall so they could not get through to him. They wanted to help. They tried to talk to him, and to include him in their social gatherings, but it was no use. He didn't know how to receive friendship.

Would you have less of loneliness in your life, and more of the satisfaction which true friendship brings? Learn to give generously of your time, and interest, and affection. Then learn, also, to accept the privileges of friendship with a grateful heart.

TRUST THOSE WHO ARE KIND TO YOU.

BE RECEPTIVE TO THOSE WHO OFFER FRIENDSHIP.

When you meet a friend, listen attentively to what he has to say. The fact that he wants to spend time with you is a mark of his friendship. Listen; and then let your reply - by the tone of your voice, by your sincerity, and your sympathy - indicate that his overture has been gladly received. Show that you are glad to see him, and that you treasure his friendship.

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#### RECEIVING LOVE

**C**LOSELY related to friendship is love. Love goes deeper than friendship. This prompts some people, with a false pride in their own self-sufficiency, to erect a wall of independence so high that no love can get past.

A man in his thirties visited frequently in a ranch home. He enjoyed social contacts, was a bright conversationalist, and was very popular with people of all ages. He was attracted by first one young lady and then another. As soon as the relationship began to have any depth he would break it off. He was afraid of love. Now forty years have passed. He has grown quiet and withdrawn. His life has shriveled because he refused love.

In contrast there is the experience of a neighbor's daughter. Never have I known a girl who was so frightened of the love of a man for a woman. She admired the boy who was courting her, but was terrified at the thought of becoming a wife and mother. Her family tried to reason with her. Her friends endeavored to dispel her fears. Finally the young man, with infinite patience, taught her how to receive love. A new expression came into the girl's face, for Love had brought both warmth and brightness into her life.

The love which can warm your life and mine may be the love of a man for a woman. It may be the love of a boy for his dad. It may be the love of a friend for a friend.

Learn to give generously of your love. Learn, also, how to receive love. This may be the harder lesson. Work at it, every day, for your life will be richer and fuller only if you master the art of receiving.

You may recall Ghirlandaio's masterpiece which portrays a beautiful lad looking into the face of an old man who has a huge wart on his nose. The look of the boy conveys something more than admiration; it is the expression of deep love. And the eyes of the man tell that he has accepted that love, and has found it very satisfying.

This experience can be yours today. Perhaps there are children - your own, or a neighbor's - whose love will brighten your life if you will only open the door and allow it to come in. You will discover that people your own age, or those who are entering the last quarter of life, are often hesitant to express their emotions, but they are none the less eager for you to accept their affection.

In great lives, love runs wide as well as deep. The experiences of Dr. Tom Dooley impress any reader of his books with his great capacity for love. One senses his longing to help everyone, the dirty street urchins as well as the rulers of Laos. Dr. Dooley not only poured out his life for strangers, but saw a friend in each person he met. He gave time, and strength, and skill to those in need. In return he received gratitude. Sometimes he had the joy of seeing pain removed, bodies healed, and strength return. He gave love; but he also knew how to receive love. Love poured back into Dr. Dooley's life from those whom he had gone to help. When it was discovered that Tom Dooley had a cancer which made treatments advisable, he received a telegram calling him back to America. In his book THE NIGHT THEY BURNED THE MOUNTAIN Dr. Dooley tells us that after he read the telegram he heard an inner voice telling him to stay in the Asian village, to "stay wrapped in the love of being needed."

Your life and mine will be richer if we allow our love to go wide as well as deep, if we reach beyond the limits of our immediate families, our close circle of friends. Those who need the love we can give are on every side. Just as much, and at times even more, they need someone who will receive the love they offer, love that can turn to poison if it simmers and dies because no one is willing to receive it.

You can render great service to others when you have learned the art of receiving: receiving gifts, receiving services, receiving friendship, receiving love.

Focus your interest upon others, upon what you can do for them, but also upon the satisfaction you can bring into their lives by graciously accepting what they long to give. As you do this, their joy will spill over into your own life. New happiness will blossom there. You will experience inner peace and a reserve of strength that is always available to those who know how to receive as well as to give.

#### AFFIRMATION

Today I will think less of myself and more of others.  
I will look for opportunities to assist, but will graciously receive what others have to give. Whatever I accept I will treasure, that it may brighten my own life.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.