



Susan's Blog

~ Living Life Completely and Well ~



Living a Soul-Inspired Life in 2023 ~ Discerning the Essential from the Nonessential

*The supreme end of education
is expert discernment in all things –*

*the power to tell the good from the bad,
the genuine from the counterfeit,
and to prefer the good and the genuine
to the bad and the counterfeit.*

~ Samuel Johnson ~



As the New Year dawns, something within us feels drawn to review the past year and consider what we want to be and do in the year to come. Winter's inward turning and the promise of a fresh start offer a precious opportunity to contemplate and explore the changes we might make to help ourselves, our loved ones, our colleagues, our neighbors... in fact, all of humanity and our planet – to live a calmer, more honest and meaningful life. An important practice we can put in place to accomplish this is *discerning the essential from the nonessential in our life*.

Discerning the essential from the nonessential determines the quality of our life – how we think, speak, and act. This discernment or lack of it has the potential for doing either harm or good to ourselves, others, and Planet Earth.

Discernment ~ Seeing What's Really So

Discernment is required if we are to choose accurately between the essential and the nonessential. Discernment is defined as the ability to judge well. Another way to define discernment is "to see what is really so." Am I aware of shadow tendencies that might cause me to share too much or dominate the conversation? Do I consider the needs and concerns of others who will be attending a meeting I schedule? Do I monitor how others are responding to me and make adjustments based on this feedback? Diane Dreher, author of *The Tao of Inner Peace*, compares discernment to gardening: "[...] as we eliminate the weeds from our lives, [we give] what we value room to grow." By removing the weeds of the nonessential, we give the essential space to bloom.



Discerning what is essential from what is not essential helps us to develop and sustain a meaningful and loving life.

Our ability to discern what is essential and what is not essential directs our lives. We will experience greater inner peace and wellbeing if we keep the intention to discern the essential from the nonessential at the front of our mind. Doing so will help us be aware of the impact of our thoughts and decisions, how we develop and sustain a meaningful and loving life, and how we connect and relate to others. **The question, "Is what I am doing or saying essential or nonessential?" has the potential to be our guiding partner in any and all of life's conversations, actions, and decisions.**

Inquiry Questions for a Soul-Inspired Life

How do we improve our ability to discern what is essential to our wellbeing and what is not? We can ponder on the following inquiry questions to explore what is essential and what is nonessential in our own life. Ask yourself: "If I knew I only had a short time to live on Planet Earth, what actions or changes would I prioritize?"

- ❖ What specifically would raise my energy to a place of inner peace? What can I focus on that comforts me and lifts me and others out of despair?
- ❖ What would make others smile and relax when I am in their presence and/or when talking with them?
- ❖ With whom do I have unfinished business and how might I lovingly finish it?
- ❖ In what ways can I focus on the solution rather than the problem, on peace rather than turmoil, on energy rather than inertia, or on acknowledging what's so rather than dismissing it?
- ❖ In what ways am I supporting not only my wellbeing but also the wellbeing of others and Planet Earth – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually?

Discerning the Essential from the Nonessential in the World

Imagine what the United States government would look like if it practiced discerning the essential from the nonessential – and took responsibility for enacting it. What would happen if this principle were applied to the systems of medicine and healthcare, to states redistricting laws, to the problems of racial and social justice, poverty and homelessness, climate collapse? Consider what the world might be like if such organizations as the United Nations and NATO approached their missions with the honest intention to discern what is really so and commit to acting only for the greater good without political or country-specific agendas.



The practice of discerning the essential from the nonessential requires honesty, self-responsibility, and commitment.

Discerning the essential from the nonessential is universally applicable. To carry out this principle, from the personal to the global level, requires honesty, self-responsibility, and commitment. Being accountable for all that we think, say, and do, means living our values and purpose with honor.

The Personal Is the Global

What happens when we view the Covid-19 pandemic through the lens of discerning the essential from the nonessential? It might be said that the failure to act upon what was essential in relation to the pandemic – on the government, state, and personal level *in most places in the world* – has caused enormous upheaval. Schools, businesses, and industries have been shuttered to prevent the spread of disease. Individuals, families, children, and workers have been under extreme stress and have experienced extended periods of suffering, physically and psychologically. People have literally come to blows over the wearing of masks and the getting of vaccinations. Millions have lost their lives.



Are we living an essential life on behalf of ourselves, humanity, nature, and our planet? Every moment is an opportunity to choose to do so.

One way to reimagine this crisis is to see it as a true opportunity – to explore where our choices, personal as well as collective, did not support our shared thriving and how we might move forward in the spirit and purpose of *our guiding partner, discerning the essential from the nonessential*. Are we living an essential life on behalf of ourselves, humanity, nature, and our planet? Every moment is an opportunity to choose to do so. Global change happens one person at a time one choice at a time. *Today, right now, I can choose to focus on what not only serves me, but on what simultaneously serves the greater good.*

Living an Essential Life Shifts the Consciousness of the Planet

As [we leave the Piscean Era and enter the Aquarian Era](#), we have the opportunity, individually and collectively, to support the transformation of Planet Earth into a radiant place of truth, peace, and Light. When we make a practice of discerning the essential from the nonessential, our life becomes meaningful, of utmost importance, vital, relevant, indispensable – in a word, *essential*. We connect with our essence, the Divine within us. Our life becomes a profound gift we can offer to ourselves, humanity, and Planet Earth to assist this transition to a higher state of consciousness: [a planet and its people defined by Divine Light](#).



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