

THE WAY OF THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

Tired of being trapped in overwhelming stress or the panic of the impoverished times we live in? Are you exhausted by the efforts to meet the requirements of each day? Ask yourself, “Am I ready to learn the skills of creating enduring happiness?”

In *The Way of the Fairy Godmother* the template for the pursuit of happiness happens to be—of all people—Cinderella’s Fairy Godmother. The Fairy Godmother, in her own way, is a transcendent, quintessential radical. Her teachings are revolutionary. Once you’ve been touched by the Fairy Godmother prepare yourself for the happiness this metamorphosis is about to bring to your life.

When the Fairy Godmother showed up in Cinderella’s life she didn’t spend time sorting out Cinderella’s conflicts with her stepmother. The Fairy Godmother did not comment on Cinderella’s victim-hood or commiserate with Cinderella about her present destitute circumstances. If the Fairy Godmother avoided Cinderella’s conflicts, ignored her pain, if she did not console and sympathize with her, what did the Fairy Godmother do?

The Fairy Godmother focused Cinderella on what was possible. She asked Cinderella to name her Deepest Desires. This is harder than it sounds. Together they developed a personalized strategy that transformed the ordinary, everyday activities in Cinderella’s life. They created a plan that allowed Cinderella to interact in life with dignity and purpose while pursuing her dreams.

In a similar manner *The Way of the Fairy Godmother* gives us the strategies to shift our attentions toward harmony and away from stress. We’ll explore the skills of savoring the positive and beautiful in life. We’ll learn to identify the personal strengths that live within our Deepest Desires. We’ll create a Proclamation that transforms each day. We’ll learn about focal points of beauty that catalyze our progress. Golden Ladders, each rung a specific behavior congruent with your Deepest Desires, will be delineated.

The Way of the Fairy Godmother will provide tools to create a plan that will gain momentum to carry us toward success and happiness. By following the simple steps taught by the Fairy Godmother we can transform our life!

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INTRODUCTION

The Way of the Fairy Godmother

I am a seeker of serenity. I search the pathways to enduring happiness. Decades of exploring and synthesizing avenues to wisdom have led me to my favorite fairytale, the tale of Cinderella. This time I didn't interpret the fairytale from Cinderella's viewpoint. Instead I apprenticed to the Fairy Godmother.

Observing her I found the Fairy Godmother incontrovertibly positive. She lives within an uncompromising, radiant happiness. As a result her lifestyle is dangerously optimistic. She expedites miraculous outcomes. It's not that she doesn't notice the problems of life. Cinderella didn't have a dress for the ball. She needed a coach and driver. When you are grounded in reality you deal with the problems.

I don't want to tell you how old I was before I began creating my life from the perspective of the Fairy Godmother. Let's just leave it at; for much of my life I was in the habit of creating from Cinderella's point of view. More often than not I was disappointed. Like Cinderella I worked and worked to create harmony in environments that would not support harmony. Such an unstinting effort is exhausting, especially after several decades. To say it was stressful and no fun only scratches the surface of the issue. It was a harsh and bleak way to live.

Imagine Cinderella in her thirties and forties scrubbing away at the kitchen floor, struggling to make beauty in an environment for people who cannot appreciate beauty. This is not a pretty picture. Living life from Cinderella's perspective is to stay entrapped in the young maiden who longs for fulfillment. Hardship is her constant companion. Unfulfilled relationships are her unremitting burden.

Our quest? We want to mature beyond the Cinderella archetype. We want to find enduring happiness. Imitating Cinderella generated disasters in my life. No, I won't describe them. It's tough to admit. I'm educated and trained in the skills of good communication. I've searched for the secrets of happy relationships. Until now I haven't been able to create enduring happiness. It's past time I set about studying The Way of the Fairy Godmother.

Through the filter of positive psychology I found the Fairy Godmother nurtures the skills of savoring. Ask yourself this question: "What is working in my life?" Years ago I read an interview with a creative visualization expert. His assertion was if we can breathe we can improve our circumstances. He meant "breathe" in the literal, not metaphoric, sense. That's intense! Do you know the power of a cleansing breath?

When the Fairy Godmother arrived in Cinderella's vegetable garden, hidden in the stalks of corn, she didn't talk with Cinderella about her problems. The Fairy Godmother's first conversation with Cinderella explored her Deepest Desires. Cinderella's dream was a first date with the Prince. Why must we find and define our Deepest Desires? Why was this question the Fairy Godmother's first topic of conversation with Cinderella? Hold on. Let's take this a little slower. According to the Fairy Godmother our Deepest Desires hold the seeds of our happiness. Entwining our Deepest Desires with personal strengths ushers us into a state of absorption and flow. Like the athlete who finds 'the zone...' engaging our strengths we are lost in the pleasure of growing mastery. One of Cinderella's strengths is her need to create beauty. She doesn't just clean. Her house shines with the love she puts into her tasks. Loving is another strength Cinderella needs to express. But there are more elements needed to create happiness.

Over time, in their work together, the Fairy Godmother models a positive language specific to Cinderella's goals and ambitions. I'm getting a little ahead of our story, but let's just say, our brains translate our words and thoughts into images. Which leaves us with the question, how does our biochemistry interact with images and symbols? Here is the short answer. Images ignite our mirror neurons. These mirror neurons are located next to our motor neurons. The excitement in mirror neurons resonates in the motor neurons and vice versa. This is why athletes can improve their athletic performance with visualization. Symbols are images already layered with meaning both individually and culturally. Working with the Fairy Godmother Cinderella will become aware of the interface between her biochemistry and symbols. The neurological and hormonal impact of images will prepare her for success and happiness.

The Fairy Godmother and Cinderella will design a Proclamation to revolutionize her life. Why is a Proclamation important? Clear goals, and mastering them, initiates self-esteem. The addition of focal points of beauty support Cinderella on the journey to enduring happiness. Golden Ladders; each rung associated with behaviors congruent with Cinderella's Deepest Desires, will delineate the actions that carve out the territory of her happiness. Exploring their apprenticeship; understanding the step by step procedures the Fairy Godmother utilized with Cinderella, we'll enter the realm of the Fairy Godmother. Our goal? Enduring happiness. If we are stuck in the Cinderella rut, there is a better way. Let's explore The Way of the Fairy Godmother.

CHAPTER ONE

A Fairy Godmother's Happiness

Are you happy? I'm not talking about superficial happiness. Wait. Superficial happiness is important. Seek it out. If you find happiness in the clothes you wear, the home you live in, a powerful car; if it's affordable? Enjoy! My only cautionary note; superficial happiness alone is a cardboard, one-dimensional, imitation of life. Superficial happiness cannot substitute the satisfaction of engaging our talents and personal strengths. It cannot take the place of the contributions we make to others. Superficial happiness, hand in hand, with a life of meaning and purpose? Perfect.

The Way of the Fairy Godmother is a path to happiness, grounded in our strengths as well as superficial enjoyments. A happiness rooted in purpose and meaning, improving our life and the lives of others. Why is this important? Authentic happiness is good for us and also good for the people who are important to us. Research in the field of positive psychology tells us happiness actually creates success. We resource our environment more effectively when happy. We feel permission to be a version of our best-possible-self. More than the pleasure of engaging our strengths and growing well-being, genuine happiness is a buffer to stress and illnesses. Genuine happiness can be larger and more powerful than our problems.

Everyone has their favorite fairy tale. Few of us notice our lives follow fairy tale motifs. Fairy tales are implanted with seeds of wisdom each reader can utilize in real life. We have forgotten fairy tales are written for the purpose of imparting wisdom. They're a map for living a life of meaning and wonder. One paradigm of happiness; tailored in the ethereal costume of fairy tales, is personified by the Fairy Godmother. I imagine her wearing a dress made from the silk of fairy dust spun together into living, oscillating threads of light. Her face is filled with an ineffable beauty. She is unshakable in her optimism. The light and color of a million rainbows fragment, permeate, and surround her. When I am with her I am exquisitely alive yet relaxed and alert.

In the story of Cinderella a pivotal moment occurs when the Fairy Godmother appears out of nowhere and startles Cinderella out of her misery. We don't know how many years Cinderella suffered before the Fairy Godmother turned up. But when the Fairy Godmother does show up Cinderella recognizes this will not be an ordinary conversation. First the Fairy Godmother asks Cinderella to describe her dreams. Positive Possibilities for our future live in our dreams. The Fairy Godmother knows how to focus Cinderella's attention. Together they design a Proclamation. They personalize a strategy. They transform elements already present in Cinderella's environment in service to their goal. Their efforts entwine, funnel together, to help Cinderella get to her first date with the Prince.

The plan encourages Cinderella to interact in life with dignity and purpose, a version of her best possible self. Re-purposing, resourcing what is already available in the environment, this revitalization is the foundation of Cinderella's success. Like all successful plans, their plan includes the superficial aspects of happiness. My Fairy Godmother and I believe, despite what philosophers might argue, utility and materialism are essential aspects of a happy life. Cinderella doesn't go to the ball wearing rags.

Cinderella is shy. Her nature is sweet. But don't confuse sweet with simple. In her kindness she is not weak. The further she steps from the myths of the wicked stepmother, the more the grief of her losses are resolved, the stronger Cinderella becomes. She is fierce. The challenges and losses in her life did not harden her as you might guess. They clarified her. She is quiet yet

astute. Her dreams to live within love have become her priority. The party dress she and the Fairy Godmother created reflect Cinderella's qualities. Do you begin to see how inner and outer work together? Who has not seen someone dressed at odds? The story of Cinderella in modern times was recreated in the movie *Pretty Woman* with Julia Roberts. Dressed as a prostitute she was garish and inappropriate. We see her inner transformation reflected in her new elegant clothes.

In the years before meeting the Fairy Godmother it may appear Cinderella has constructed a solitary world. Yet all day long Cinderella is interacting with nature. The sun marks the passage of her day. A cool breeze is a gift after weeding the vegetables. She marks the weather's impact on her garden, hoping for a little more of this and a little less of that. She keeps her mother's vision alive tending to the rose garden and is rewarded by their fragrance and beauty. Throughout the day she talks with the farm animals. Blackie is always ready to share a walk in the forest. Even while she cleans Cinderella is interacting with the positive memories of her family life. While limited; nature, animals, memories are effective at keeping Cinderella open to the goodness in life.

Researchers say there is little happiness in solitude. Based on their statistics all happiness requires social engagement with people. I disagree. Solitary happiness can be a piece of the bigger pie known as complete happiness. ...You'll know what's true for you. Beyond this debate positive psychology tells us happiness is the synergistic combination of positive emotions, the engagement of personal strengths, and building self-mastery in service to a purpose greater than ourselves. Could we say happiness is a marriage of the superficial with our deeper purpose and solitude balanced interactions? In the domain of the Fairy Godmother authentic happiness is achieved when we utilize our personal strengths engaged in the pursuit of our Deepest Desires. Desires filled with purpose and meaning, for ourselves and those around us. WHEW! It's epic!

This is why Old Wise Ones encouraged us to live our dreams. The actions required to manifest our dreams into tangible reality can crush us. But engaged in the pursuit of authentic happiness we are buffered from the erosive effects of stress. That's right, in the realm of the Fairy Godmother we don't have to realize our final goal of happiness to be under the umbrella of its protection. Ultimately our pursuit of authentic happiness grounds us in the essential self and is larger than our problems. It still sounds like a fairy tale until we realize all the work involved. Fairy tales are filled with insurmountable tasks and enormous burdens. And so is real life.

Often we feel the time to realize our dream has passed us by. Is it true? Do you know beyond a shadow of doubt your dream is irrelevant? Is there a time when dreams are no longer applicable? Before we throw away our dreams let's apply the skills of good living to a dream. Ask yourself, does my dream need updating? Does my dream take a different form now than twenty years earlier? Do I have competing dreams? Are there different periods of life to accomplish these goals? As motherhood is tethered to the years of our fertility some dreams are tied to our developmental capacities or other resources. Unrealized dreams can take on new life. Let me give an example from my own past.

How can dreams from our past unexpectedly fulfill us? I longed to be a dancer in my twenties. I changed my major from Sociology to a double major, Dance and Sociology. Eventually I recognized I did not have the skills to realize my dreams. I had started dancing too late. My body could not keep up with the muscle memory of women who started dancing when they were six. I struggled, striving to realize my goal, and ultimately grieved the loss of my dream. I was never going to be the dancer I longed to become. I could become a teacher or a choreographer. Instead

I turned my attention to another dream, graduate school in counseling. Years later a woman, much like a Fairy Godmother to me, told me, “Our lost dreams come back to us. They return better than before.” It sounded good. But I didn’t believe it possible for me.

Yet in my forties I went to a yoga class with my girlfriend who was going through a divorce. She begged me to go with her for moral support. I was so grateful I wasn’t going through a divorce, I agreed. In a few weeks my friend was nowhere near a yoga mat. I was taking classes several times a week. It seemed my meditations, prayers, ceremonies from recent years, in conjunction with my failed dance dreams, came together in an unexpected way. I lost myself in the flow of stillness and movement. It was the beginning for me of daily yoga spanning the next twelve years. Dreams, seemingly failed, from our past can be reborn.

On the surface the interaction between Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother looked magical and mystical—and it was. Yet at the practical level they utilized tools available to us all. Tools designed to encourage positive outcomes. The Fairy Godmother knows climbing the Golden Ladder, where each rung represents a specific action tied to a Deepest Desire, will transport us toward success. How exactly does this work? Each of us is born into life with personal strengths. Our quest for a happier life begins with identifying our individual powers. And your next question might be, “What are personal strengths and powers?”

Let’s take a look at Cinderella. She is sweet and thoughtful. Although her family bosses her around, overwhelming her with tasks, the reason she is able to get it all done is because she likes work that makes her home beautiful. Another person’s distinguishing strengths might be courage and loyalty. For others friendship and acceptance, or curiosity and ingenuity could be revealed as strengths. Look at scholars. I would be surprised if you could find one scholar who was not the curious type. Curiosity is found in most teachers combined with an infectious enthusiasm for sharing knowledge. Each of us has a mix of strengths drawn from the universal pool of faith, truth, love, beauty, temperance, and creativity, love of learning, justice, wisdom, kindness, leadership, fairness, or transcendence.

These sound lofty or maybe they only look great on paper. But what I know for sure, (thank you Oprah) ignoring our strengths puts our happiness at risk. Engaging our talents is the foundation of satisfaction in life. When we lose ourselves in strengths time falls away. Think of the scholar lost in an array of books, looking at the clock, dazed to realize how much time disappeared. We can identify our strengths by paying attention. When do we lose self-consciousness? When are we so absorbed in tasks time slips away? And notice what gives you joy. Joy is a sure sign we’re engaging our strengths.

Cinderella is young and has not matured to the point of manifesting her dreams. However she is already engaging her strengths. The Fairy Godmother is drawn to Cinderella’s passion for extending love and creating beauty. Undeterred by criticism raining down upon her Cinderella brings a loving presence into every moment and each chore. While she works Cinderella interacts with her Deepest Desire to love well. She remembers her mother and father and their family flourishing in her childhood home. This focus shields her from the negativity in her environment. Is it possible Cinderella works, not for the interlopers living in her home, but to honor her parents? Could her step-monsters be irrelevant? By the time the Fairy Godmother appears their criticisms and anger roll off Cinderella. She stays focused on the task in front of her. Cinderella affirms life grounded in her ability to love and create beauty. Cinderella’s problem is finding a relationship to engage and return her love.

I’m embarrassed to say I was 50 years old before I realized I might be more productive if I embraced the Fairy Godmother as my personal symbol rather than Cinderella. So I started

reading. I searched for books about fairies or the Fairy Godmother specifically. I cobbled together ideas, a sentence here and there that carried the ring of authenticity. This is an important tool. For those of you ready to hear this: Learn to listen for the ring of truth. It is invaluable in life and fairy tales.

I studied each fairy tale assessing the symbols. I strained to see beyond cultural imprints. Then I had an epiphany. The interactions between Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother form an apprenticeship. Yes, Cinderella is apprenticing to the Fairy Godmother! She is a Fairy Godmother in training. Like all healers Cinderella's life is her first training ground. Is it true we can heal others once we've healed the wounds of our past? Is this how we develop skills?

As an apprentice to psychology and mysticism, I first practiced healing on the ruptures of my past distorting the present. I had a teacher who was like a Fairy Godmother. I spent decades training. I learned and then incorporated the practices of healing from many cultures. Knowledge is transformed into wisdom only when we practice and use the tools ourselves. I can study how to hang a painting but I only know how to use the hammer and nail when I try hanging a painting for myself. As my apprenticeship continued I sat in stillness for twenty minutes a day. I was taught how to smooth the energy lines and danced with power each day. I learned how to build tools of prayer. I followed a process to awaken the Four Directions. I practiced moving through the directions. Now I choreograph energy with positive intent. Most importantly I learned to create beauty.

Cinderella and I learned the transformation of knowledge to wisdom by practicing the tools of healing on the wounds of the past until they were resolved or simply no longer required our attention. Cinderella awakens to a version of her best possible self in order to find her Prince, become a Princess, and eventually transform into a Queen. Imagine a Queen with the skills of a Fairy Godmother. I'm not talking about fairy tales. I'm talking about real life!

Come on! Why don't we have classes in high school? Teach girls, entering the period of the Young Maiden, the skills of searching for and identifying a Prince. Teach our young women, not the cultural representations of spoiled princess and domineering queen, but the authentic choices of strengths-in-action. Imagine the ripple out effect of declining divorce rates, reducing the overcrowding in the family court system, well-tended children....Wait! I'm not done yet!

Instruct young men in the leadership of a Prince and later King. Teach children to hear the ring of truth by honoring the resonance at home and work, in church, or during an argument. Identify the tools of congruency, strengths synchronized across the dimensions of mind, body and spirit. Educate them when confronted with a discrepancy between words and behavior (IE: wolf in sheep's clothing, silver tongue and no follow through) be cautious! Teach children how to identify and avoid risky relationships and how to exit when necessary.

My own apprenticeship to the Fairy Godmother was a revelation and the foundation of this book. The Fairy Godmother provided the tools of wisdom for Cinderella to find her "happily ever-after." You probably realized all along the Fairy Godmother was training Cinderella in the skills of living well. I was so involved in the goal I missed the process. I had to slow down and observe the Fairy Godmother in my meditations. I discovered a delicate, magical creature. For her, prolonged exposure to the harsh toxicities of modern life is lethal. Negativity, pollution, dysfunctional relationships are deadly for her....and you too! Her home is in the ether realm of the Fairies. But out of her deep and abiding commitment to share the qualities of love, beauty and virtue, she occasionally penetrates our physical environment to teach us. She is beneficent and altruistic. She is committed to a path of radiant happiness.

At this point some of you may be thinking it's easy for the Fairy Godmother to be happy because she has no adversity in her life. Whether or not the Fairy Godmother has adversity or has grown beyond the bounds of adversity is not an issue for me. Instead I wonder: How does the Fairy Godmother operate? What tools does she use to transform Cinderella from a waif into a princess—from a servant into royalty? It's not the magic wand that caused the transformation. Even though the Fairy Godmother's wand is filled with a million years of starlight, a magic wand is only a device designed to focus the owner's personal potency. Can you imagine a million years of starlight backing up your personal power? Holy Cow.

What transformed Cinderella? How was Cinderella purified? Yep, to reach our goals we all go through purification mind-body-spirit. Do some of us turn our backs on our dreams because we are afraid of what we'll have to face, in ourselves and others? The Fairy Godmother gave the skills of happiness to Cinderella. *Cinderella* used these gifts to bring about *her own* transformation. How many people in your life are committed to expressing happiness in a way that betters themselves and others? I'm talking about the capacity and willingness to perform acts of caring, practical expressions of love. Troubles in today's world can be overwhelming. We see broken families, economic downturns, loss of jobs and recently epidemic losses of homes, my own included. War, terrorism, illness, lack of medical care, shortages of food and water; the list goes on and on. These adversities touch all our lives. We all struggle to one extent or another with unprecedented stress. Is it accurate to say genuine happiness and beauty in the midst of these overwhelming challenges has become as rare as the appearance of the Fairy Godmother? Many of us are preoccupied with the struggle to survive the painful and impoverished times we live in.

But wait! Even in this chaos there is a path to happiness. Creating beauty and positive outcomes in the midst of turmoil is at the heart of the Fairy Godmother's teachings. The Fairy Godmother is, in her own way, a transcendent, quintessential radical. Yes, her teachings are revolutionary. Awaken to the teachings of the Fairy Godmother and prepare yourself. You too may stumble into the realm of transcendent happiness.

CHAPTER TWO

Deepest Desires: The First Key to Happiness

Our Deepest Desires hold the seeds of our happiness. The beginnings of happiness are born from our identification and recognition of Deepest Desires.

In the Fairy Godmother's relationship with Cinderella we find the tools required for creating happiness embedded in their interactions. Cinderella's first encounter with the Fairy Godmother takes place in the lush rows of the vegetable garden. It is early evening. The air is beginning to cool. Lengthening shadows bend color. The garden reflects the deepening colors of plants and trees saturated in twilight. Cinderella's eyes pass over the Fairy Godmother than backtrack. How many times in the past have Cinderella's eyes passed over the Fairy Godmother unseeing? Startled by the perfection of the Fairy Godmother Cinderella is jarred out of her unhappiness. Have you ever been moved out of misery by the perfection of a setting sun, a full moon rising, or the compassion in the eyes of a friend?

The Fairy Godmother often appears at dawn or twilight. Within the balance of the light and dark, transitioning day to night, night to day, sunlight to moonlight, while the trees sigh and take their breath, the Fairy Godmother slides into the mortal world. The sight of the Fairy Godmother astonishes Cinderella. This is often a first step out of unhappiness. Something surprises us. In this case encountering a Fairy Godmother stuns Cinderella out of her feelings of hopelessness. By holding her vision steady on the Fairy Godmother Cinderella is standing within virgin territory. A unique circumstance she has never encountered before. In the Fairy Godmother's presence Cinderella is shocked into wholeness. She is alive to her totality. Fueled by the adrenalin flowing through her, something indefinable ignites. It is a force greater than her fears. Strength greater than the destructive power of toxic relationships inhabits her.

This is what happens when we stumble into the presence of the Fairy Godmother. Standing within her enlightenment we are jarred awake, jolted into self-awareness. Our personal resources flood forward engaging strengths, those talents uniquely our own. The skills of resiliency are at our fingertips. Positive Possibilities emerge. We identify our talents. We re-purpose assets previously unnoticed in our environment and skill set. The moment is a flash in the context of eternity. What I've described here in a couple of paragraphs, in mortal time could take years. In modern-life, circumstances can disguise the appearance of the Fairy Godmother. A health problem may cause us to re-prioritize the structure of our life. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome disabled the author of *The Story of Sea-biscuit*. Ordinary tasks of life beyond her ability Laura Hildebrand wrote from bed her now famous book about the race horse Seabiscuit. The Fairy Godmother doesn't always appear in stardust and moon glow.

Despite the fact that Cinderella engages her personal strengths each day and thus is protected in-part from the toxic relationships around her, she lives surrounded by misery. The potency of the Fairy Godmother's radiance knocks Cinderella out of her entrenched ways of thinking and perceiving. This moment, free of ingrained patterns of perception, is fertile ground for Cinderella's transformation. Letting the new, in this case the Fairy Godmother, into her circle of awareness Cinderella has courted insight and change. She is inundated with new ways of perceiving. When we are in the presence of someone, like the Fairy Godmother, who knows their strengths, knows their skills and engages these resources to manifest Positive Possibilities; hope

awakens within us. We no longer vibrate at the frequency of our problems. Instead we vibrate at the frequency of hope.

In Tibet if we go to a healer s/he might give us a Mandala. Here are the healing concepts underlying Mandala treatment: In our illness or disease we vibrate with the frequency of our illness. Taking the Mandala home, we are instructed to meditate and become At One with the picture, At One with its vibrational frequency. Once we have entrained the frequency of the Mandala we are cured. We may heal to be symptom free. We may heal yet continue, for reasons beyond our understanding, to carry the physical manifestation of symptoms. We could heal and transition into 'a good death.' There are so many ways to heal in addition the disappearance of symptoms. Both illness and healing live in the Great Mystery.

In western medicine utilizing symptom-based-causal-thinking; only the disappearance of our symptoms is considered a cure. In Mandala therapy becoming At One with the Mandala, regardless of our symptoms, we no longer vibrate at the frequency of illness. Instead we vibrate with the frequency of health represented within the picture of the Mandala. We may still have our symptoms but we are liberated, permeated by Grace. The same phenomenon occurs when we encounter and embrace hope. We vibrate at the frequency of hope. We don't know where hope will take us. We don't know the avenues it will open. In the presence of the Fairy Godmother Cinderella begins to vibrate with hope.

Shawn Achor, the author of *The Happiness Advantage*, shares the story of his arrival at Harvard. It was love at first sight. The buildings, steeped in the traditions of education, reverberate with the finest minds in our country's history. He felt the energetic frequency embrace him. Did all the brilliant minds walking the paths over the generations, well, did their intellectual resonance leave a trail? This is the image that comes to me. You know, and I say this with the greatest respect, like the shiny snail trail left behind in a snail's wake. If they did leave an invisible, sparkling, trail of knowledge and wisdom Shawn absorbed their perfume. He felt empowered.

When we feel empowered we are more likely to see opportunities and manifest a version of our best possible self. We are courting success. This is what happened to Cinderella in the Fairy Godmother's presence. She shed the lower frequency of her depression. She joined and embodied the frequency of the Fairy Godmother. She is empowered. Positive Possibilities reveal themselves in the wake of a higher frequency. In India it's a fortuitous event to eat fruit blessed by the guru. The blessed food is now impregnated with the essential oscillation of the guru. When you eat the fruit you become literally and metaphorically At One with the guru's vibration and the vibration of the blessing. Is that too far out for you? Another example from everyday life is the prayer we say at meal times. Why do we bother to say a prayer? The words are permeated within the sacred frequency of the blessing and we expect our food to be imbued with the blessing as well. WHEW!

Why is this hocus-pocus important? Free of her habitual hopelessness Cinderella is able to see Positive Possibilities in her future. She digested the frequency of the Fairy Godmother. This is a first step to becoming sovereign unto herself. As an apprentice to the Fairy Godmother, as a fledgling Queen, she perceives Positive Possibilities surrounding her in the garden. The pumpkin hollowed out is large enough to become a carriage and transport her to the ball. Her friends the mice, transformed within her vision, could pull her carriage. I have no idea how Cinderella saw the mice as able to pull the carriage. I do know when we look at the resources already in our environment, within a fresh perspective, those resources can be re-purposed. Creativity mixed with resources reveals new, potentially ingenious, solutions.

Wait. I'm getting ahead of myself in the story. First, we see by sharing the aura of the Fairy Godmother, Cinderella is cleansed of her depression. In the words of Tibetan healing: After sharing the frequency of the Fairy Godmother, who already lives her Sovereignty and is At One with the healing powers of the Universe, Cinderella is cleansed. The world looks different to her. She is fueled by her strengths. She's prepared to engage her resources. Positive Possibilities spread out before her.

Next, the Fairy Godmother invites Cinderella to speak her Deepest Desires. Being listened to with attention is a new experience for Cinderella. And very few people talk about Deepest Desires. No one in recent years has taken the time to get to know Cinderella. Before her meeting with the Fairy Godmother, she has been abandoned, ignored. After the death of her Mother and Father she lost her role as a beloved daughter at the center of a nurturing family. Her identity was stripped from her. She has subsisted as an indentured servant. I'm sure you can see how powerful it might be to give voice to our Deepest Desires while being listened to with care, respect and attention under ordinary circumstances. Think how Cinderella must have felt.

If Cinderella told her stepmother she dreamed of becoming a Queen she would have been laughed out of the room. Yet, all women want to become Queen. Cinderella's stepsisters are in a competition to become Queen. To each sister becoming Queen means they will not have to do any work. They will live in the most beautiful home in the neighborhood. People will line up to do them favors and bring them gifts. They will have the most beautiful clothes of all their friends. Their jewelry will outshine every other woman in the land. Finally, they will be married to the second most powerful man in the nation, the Prince. They will be the second most powerful woman in the Kingdom. These girls don't know the pathways of authentic interaction; filled with heart, purpose and meaning. They can only see the superficial benefits of marrying the Prince.

Cinderella does not want to be Queen in the, "I'm more powerful than you," sense. Sovereignty, a personal authority aligned with a version of her best-possible-self, will define her immediate world. She fulfills her Deepest Desires to live within the glow of realizing her ambitions. She is fueled by her strengths. Her actions create beauty; a vastly under rated power in a world gone mad with technology and science. Beauty sparks health and wellness to animate the lives of those around her. Taught by the Fairy Godmother to surround herself with Focal Points of Beauty they remind her of her purpose. For example, after meeting with the Fairy Godmother she sketched a drawing of her parents. In the garden shed, where no one else goes, she hung the picture. Each time her eye falls on the image she is awash in the memories of her loving family. She is inspired to re-create another loving family in the future. The drawing reminds her of her purpose: To give and receive love in a mutually beneficial loop of reciprocity. She wants to share strengths with her partner. Their strengths will dovetail and together they are more powerful than when they are apart. Cinderella understands true power is not power over or domination of another. True power is our ability to create well-being. True power is our skill, our capacity to choreograph our life with well-being. This is what Cinderella means when she says she wants to be Queen.

The Fairy Godmother asks Cinderella to speak her Deepest Desires. Put yourself in Cinderella's shoes. Could you gather scattered wits, choose courage and claim your dreams? Surrounded by the heartbeat of the Fairy's love and acceptance, Cinderella chooses courage and gives voice to her secret and previously unspoken dreams. Thinking out loud she begins to refine her ideas. Within the radiance of the Fairy Godmother's love Cinderella's hope begins to burn brightly. After meeting the Fairy Godmother Cinderella is filled to overflowing with her Deepest

Desires. Morning, noon and night while she cleans and waits on her wicked family, Cinderella doesn't focus anymore on who she is serving. Instead she dreams of a life giving and receiving love. Every chore is infused with these qualities.

Yet for all her love Cinderella does not have the tools; the knowledge of the moving parts required to manifest her goals. Before she met the Fairy Godmother how long did Cinderella work, ceaselessly, love spilling through her and into her chores? How long did she go unnoticed and uncared for by the people around her? I call this period the Great Silence: An indeterminate amount of time where all our efforts go unrewarded. A period of time where it appears that life is unresponsive to our efforts, pain, prayers and needs. We feel lost, abandoned, and without resources. It is a period of painful deprivation within our mind and heart if not reality. In the misery of the Great Silence we feel trapped and ineffective. We are disconnected from our creativity. We feel disenfranchised from our strengths and talents. If the Great Silence lasts a moment, day or decades, we feel trapped by the crushing enormity of its endless nature. Love saved Cinderella. Love kept her from becoming bitter. Love shielded her from the callous treatment she received from her stepmother. Love drew the attention of the Fairy Godmother.

In subsequent garden meetings, the Fairy Godmother taught Cinderella the importance of designing Proclamations. She introduced Cinderella to Golden Ladders where each rung is associated with a tangible behavior. Actions aligned with Deepest Desires create a literal manifestation of our dreams in the physical world. Let me say that again. Actions aligned with Deepest Desires are necessary to create a literal manifestation of our dreams in the physical world. Deepest Desires, Proclamations, a Golden Ladder, through these Cinderella was confronted with the lessons of congruence.

Is it because Cinderella is ready for change? Is this why Cinderella's eye fell on the Fairy Godmother and held? She knows people will say a Fairy Godmother does not exist. Rational people do not see Fairy Godmothers hanging out in the vegetable patch. Cinderella's eye fell on the Fairy Godmother (we could say her vision encompassed the miraculous) and today she could see the Fairy Godmother without turning away. How is this possible?

Cinderella has kept her life rich with love and interaction. Yes, in the social isolation imposed by her step-family, Cinderella converses with Mother Nature. Walks in the ever-changing forest where each tree's rough bark houses a core of satisfying strength within, restores her equilibrium. In early spring, leaves create a green canopy under blue skies which thicken with summer's heat. Seasons change bringing bare branches, pristine and stark under winter's gray sky. Cinderella feels a kindred spirit in the trees loss of foliage. She too has lost the many comforts of her outer life.

Water spills over boulders, eddies, only to swirl into stillness across the face of quiet ponds. Along the water's edges north rock faces are covered in springy moss. Cinderella gathers moss to store as nature's bandage. Compacting the plant material she stores it in a leather medicine bag that had been her mother's. She rescued the bag from the trash after her mother's death. The painted flowers on the leather exterior are faded. *One day*, she promises herself, *I'll repaint the flowers. I'll follow the curves and lines my mother designed.* Imagining the paint colors, sometimes she feels her mother looking over her shoulder with a smile. It makes her heart beat fast and her lips soften into an answering grin. Bittersweet the moment passes in a flash, leaving her shaken and so alone. But Cinderella would never trade the split second communion to avoid the renewed loss.

One morning, sitting in the shadow of trees near the stream's edge, Cinderella settled in her favorite resting spot. The horses wander. They drink water sourced from the mountain's

underground springs. Glacier water traveling by way of the foothill streams is frigid and clear. Her back supported by a tree trunk Cinderella dozed. Life is arduous. Whenever she stops, moments of relaxation melt into sleep. In the dappled shade, fragrant with Bay Laurel trees, the summer sun filters through the interwoven branches. Heavy with abundant leaves, the tree arms create a lattice. Light shines through in luminous greens and hazy gold. Cinderella felt the vibrancy of life enter the base of her spine. Sap tracks the tree trunk as small sparkles of light travel the interior of her vertebral column. The warmth of the sun softened tired muscles. The fragrance of Bay leaves floated on the day's thickening heat. The earth is solid beneath her. A soft breeze carries down the mountain lifting the fine hair along the edges of her face. In the safety and congruency of life surrounding her, Cinderella fell into her dreams. Dream-walking with the Fairy Godmother she pruned her dreams shaping them with her Deepest Desires.

Later, walking among the friendly giants where the tree trunks are wider than her ability to span wrapping her arms around the circumference, Cinderella pressed her cheek against the tree until it is imprinted with the rough bark. She whispers a request, seeking permission to harvest Bay leaves she'll use in cooking or simmering in hot bath water. The herb will cleanse the air. She pulled strands of hair, leaving them cascading over branches, she murmurs her prayers of gratitude.

On hot summer afternoons accompanied by her dog, Blackie, who pants beside her between his trips to the stream, there is no dreaming. The water fractures reflecting light. The stream dances with gravity; splashing over rocks or settling into deep pools. Cinderella cannot resist the invitation. Laughing with her black companion Cinderella shivers with pleasure. She rode home in wet skirts savoring their infrequent fun. Her faithful dog has walked with her through every moment of grief and turmoil. Blackie waits patiently for their walks, never faltering with his comfort. She laughed observing his expectant face, remembering her father say, "Blackie is the name you get when a young girl names the family dog." Blackie slept at the foot of her bed. And her Mother's cat now sleeps with her as well. At first the cat sought Cinderella's comfort. Now she gives solace to Cinderella in the echoing hush of the Great Silence. The cat snuggles at Cinderella's feet keeping them warm in winter. Sometimes she awakens to find her cat stretched out over the top of her head. In the coldest nights of winter they all sleep at the hearth. Dying embers glinting final warmth before fading into gray ash while Cinderella, the cat and Blackie snuggle under a worn velvet blanket.

Pruning her mother's roses for winter she remembers the flowers color and fragrance. A lingering memory in the dried petals fills the carved wooden bowls in the front rooms. Then beginning with the stirring of power in early spring Cinderella converses with the garden until the vegetable patch is fulfilled in summer's growing bounty. The rows delineating produce are immaculately weeded. Cinderella carried the water from the well in buckets and carefully waters each plant. Surrounded by Cinderella's love the flowers and vegetables flourish. She waits to harvest each crop, listening with the invisible ear, for the moment in time when full, they shimmer with health. Harvest is followed by autumn's great yawn, accompanied with Cinderella's silent prayer for the garden's winter sleep. These are the conversations of Cinderella's daily interactions.

More conversations are found where Cinderella nurtures the animals. Feeding and grooming she whispers in their fur. She laughs at their gentle bumps. They press and snuffle against her pockets looking for the apples and carrots Cinderella brings from the gardens or smuggles dried from the pantry. She exercises the horses following mountain streams. A goat in the barn keeps the horses calm. Their milk provides the basics for the feta cheese Cinderella used in summer

salads. Her father won “Mr. Goat” in a Bridge tournament held in the castle ballroom. Sometimes the family spent the weekend when the tournament extended over a period of several days. This is how Cinderella first met the Prince. A secret she kept buried deep to obscure the family resources from her stepmother.

The cow is milked twice a day. Cinderella leans her forehead into the cow’s solid belly and for the briefest moment feels a softening in her raw heart. How the cow provided this maternal comfort was a mystery. After her stepmother fired the servants, leaving Cinderella to cope with their chores, mourning her parent’s passing, Cinderella cried at every milking. But the cow never faltered producing milk for the household. Cinderella understood the milk production for what it is; an act of love.

Chickens gossip and chatter pecking around her feet for the generous handfuls of corn grown in her Mother’s vegetable garden. They never bite her as she collects the eggs. Once her stepsister tried relieving a chicken of her eggs and felt the sharp peck of a beak. Wailing she ran inside for comfort. A preternatural silence descended. Cinderella counted five heartbeats. The stepmother raced into the yard, a river of murky red streaming behind her. She flew at the chicken who managed one faint squawk. Face contorted, eyes bloodshot, she twisted the neck with hands swollen with fury. Throwing the dead bird at Cinderella’s feet she shouted, “Chicken pot pie. Five PM.” Cinderella sobbed her way through the preparations.

In contrast, it is with murmuring friendly words she feeds the chickens. They give bountiful eggs, large and wondrous, under her care. The family cow is generous. She feels the comfort of Cinderella’s voice and the respectful urgings of her hands pulling the milk through her udders. The kitchens and wash rooms are scrubbed. The furniture is polished. Rugs are beaten free of dust. Food is prepared with prayer. The world under the care of Cinderella shines with these interactions grounded in love. Even the interior of her parent’s house has a special glow. Filled with treasures Cinderella’s mother created before her untimely death. As Cinderella dusts and sweeps until the house sparkles, she remembers the joy of living with her parents. Family dinners were filled with laughter and debate. Working together on projects Cinderella learned the ways of keeping a home. She remembers evenings spent by the fire reading or making music. All had been well in the small household.

One day a woman appeared at their door with a story of need and two small children. Caught up in the tale of the woman’s dire circumstance Cinderella’s mother and father befriended her. Who has not at one time or another been trapped by others impossible needs? We want to offer sanctuary, yet find ourselves unwilling to sacrifice the personal costs of health, time or money. Cinderella’s parents made a different choice. With a life overflowing with wellness they extend their hospitality. They commit their help, offering the woman and her daughters a new beginning. They supply her with employment in their household. Soon they are helplessly entangled, when unexpectedly, traumatically, Cinderella’s mother sickened and died. Remembering, Cinderella pulls the wool shawl closer to ward off the memory. But she cannot shake the agony of watching her mother suffer.

Had there been a connection with the arrival of the woman, who became her stepmother, and the death of her mother? Cinderella wonders, *Could anyone be so wicked? And why was father so quick to marry?* He could never really explain why he remarried. It seemed to confuse him as much as Cinderella. In the last weeks of his life he’d become lucid and stronger. He spoke of righting a terrible wrong. Traveling without telling anyone his destinations he shared with Cinderella he needed a little more time before he explained. After his death Cinderella

questioned, *What information had he found? What was the wrong he wanted to right?* But this is another story for another time. A tale worked out in the mists of eternity far from Cinderella.

Before the arrival of the Fairy Godmother no one had inquired about Cinderella's dreams for years. Who in your life asks you about your hopes and dreams? Who supports you in your aspirations without judgment or criticism? Does it take beneficent-supernatural-aide to listen with the mind and heart with unconditional love? Just as important what does it require to receive love? When Cinderella asked the Fairy Godmother these questions she was unprepared for the answer. "Cinderella it takes the presence of the Inner Sanctum both to give and receive love." Cinderella did just what you and I would do. She stared blankly at the Fairy Godmother. "Inner Sanctum? What is this place?"

Now the Fairy looked fierce. Yes, Fairies are not just loving and kind. A Fairy lives within the heartbeat of truth. They live in the gap between who we are now and any version of our best-possible-self. They are impeccable warriors for infinite translations of our best-possible-life. Did you think they were just delicate creatures? In some ways they are delicate. They cannot survive in deceit, pollution or toxic relationships. The Fairy Godmother looked at Cinderella to assess her readiness to receive the answer to her question. "The Inner Sanctum is a holy place you build. It must endure across the dimensions of Self. From this place you offer and receive love. This is the birthplace of genuine self-acceptance. Self-respect, self-esteem these are expressions of the Inner Sanctum."

How does Cinderella build her personal sanctuary? How do any of us build the muscle to sit in stillness and await the offerings of beneficence? Staring into middle space an idea popped into her head. "Maybe the Inner Sanctum is my drive to create beauty? The beginning of a sacred home within – what – my soul? Spirit? Emotions? Physical body? Where exactly does it reside? Is my desire to please Blackie and all of the animals; to nurture and love them is that the beginning? Does personal authority exist in this transcendent, holy, place?"

Meeting the Fairy Godmother for the first time Cinderella was shocked out of her habitual ways of thinking. She was working in the garden after her stepmother banished her from the house for the day. Cinderella didn't mind. The earth was alive under her fingers. The sun warm against her skin. A quiet stirring of air keeps her cool. Cinderella was amazed by people who don't understand the earth is alive. *How could a dead planet grow crops?* She listens to the earth speaking with her intuition while planting her kitchen garden. She rotates plantings each year to replenish the soil. On her hands and knees, fingers grip and release the dirt to work in compost. Searching for areas in the neatly planted rows that might need attention, Cinderella peers into the newly unfurling leaves of spring corn. The Fairy Godmother, partially hidden within the drooping yellow silk tassels, intently watched Cinderella.

At this first meeting the Fairy Godmother is inches tall, but her radiance spreads beyond the garden. Her brilliance steals the breath from Cinderella's lungs. The Fairy Godmother sparkles. The air shimmers with her power. Each plant, flower and leaf, is etched vividly against the distant backdrop of forest. Cinderella smells a connection with all life. From the worms wiggling their way deeper into the earth, to the far off Bay and oak trees swaying in the soft breeze. The breath of life fills Cinderella's belly and she is reborn.

Have you ever noticed when you are shocked or terrified suddenly the world and your priorities shift? This happens to Cinderella when she sees the Fairy Godmother. Happily she finds enough composure to speak. She says, "Good evening Wise One. Can I help you?" The Fairy Godmother smiles, "I'm here to help you. Together we'll explore your Deepest Desires." And then she listens to Cinderella's Deepest Desires from the perspective of the Universal Law

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