

The Traveler Within



The Journey Into Affirmative Introspection

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us. And when we bring what is within us out into the world, miracles happen.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

I recently took a “traveler’s poll” of some of San Miguel’s long-time residents as well as some of its short-time visitors. The question I asked them pertained to part of Emerson’s quote and virtually everyone preferred to explore the terrain *before them* rather than the ground they’ve already covered *behind them*. It makes perfect sense to want to seek out new experiences rather than return to those we’ve already integrated into our travel memoirs. But according to Emerson the destinations *before us* are far less important than those residing *within us*. And why they are of such importance he asserts is because *miracles happen* when we venture within ourselves and bring what we discover there out into the world.

This can be a difficult concept to grasp because it flies in the face of how most people think about their travel plans, themselves and the origins of miracles. Typically miracles are *sought out* not *sought in*. Every year millions of people embark on pilgrimages across the globe to holy lands and spiritual sites hoping to experience a miracle. How many of these pilgrims do you think would consider cancelling their travel plans and instead journey within to locate the very miracle they were about to travel thousands of miles to seek out?

The notion of miracles arising from within is not something most people consider, after all aren’t saints the only ones blessed with that kind of capability? Besides, what could possibly reside within us that would possess such power?

But what if Emerson is right, that there is indeed a sacred destination within us that possesses the power to evoke miracles in our lives? It may seem like a distant possibility, but what do we have to lose by exploring the notion? After all, the traveler’s credo is, *“The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.”* And that first step in this case has to do with what I

call *Affirmative Introspection*; a mature traveler's practice in which we engage in a self-inquiry process from the positive point of view of looking for something wonderful within us rather than scoffing at the possibility, or seeking evidence to prove it doesn't exist.

In my last article I touched on four areas of engagement or inner destinations that pertain to this introspection process; they are our *physical, mental, emotional* and *spiritual* selves. The destination I believe Emerson is pointing to within us is somewhere between the latter two, the nexus point between our heart and our soul. Much like the Earth and the Sky, these two places within us are rich with the miracle of life, light and love. Just as a field of flowers opens wide their petals to embrace the light of the Sun, as *wise life travelers* we too can open our hearts and embrace the beauty of life and the privilege it is to be alive. Also just as the oceans of the Earth are moved by the gravity of the Moon, so to can our soul be touched and moved by the Grace of God, the miracle of Spirit and the Majesty of the Cosmos.

But how do we access this profound resource of beauty, aliveness and grace dwelling within us? And how do we bring it into the world so it can produce miracles? The next time you watch a sunset, or a lightning storm, or peer up at the golden moon, or close your eyes and feel the cool wind upon your face, step out of time for a moment, forget about you as you've known yourself and open to *Affirmative Introspection* by asking yourself this, "How is it I can behold this remarkable beauty *before me* unless it already exists somewhere *within me*? And once we open to what is wonderful within us how do we bring about miracles in the world you may ask? Share the experience of beauty, aliveness and grace moving within you with *just one other human being* and watch the miracles begin.



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