

Dear Mom...

Dear Mom... Ya, you the woman I don't know anymore. Someone I've not had any kind of meaningful conversation with in twenty years. TWENTY YEARS!!! I can date the date! I still have the letter you wrote me. It would take me two minutes to dig it out of my lock box, May 1991! You can forgive, but you'll NEVER forget. Ya, I guess we wrote each other off. This past week, my husband finished a fish pond for me. There is still landscaping to do around the whole project. Backfilling and digging out of a drainage ditch. The good news is that the fish are safe in their new home, the water is being pumped and kept oxygenated, and when all is said and done, we'll have a quiet, and peaceful place to sit and meditate in the evenings. We watch fish, we watch the birds, we talk to each other, we enjoy our surroundings-- we enjoy our life. [caption id="attachment_1709" align="alignleft" width="246" caption="The little golden statue from Uncle Tom's place now resides inside my pond. Bouquet by Viki Ann Snyder."]



[/caption] I've already placed some water plants in the 'upper' pond on a shelf that he created in the middle for me. In the Corkscrew Rush that I had kept alive inside a cement mixing tub for a year prior, as I waited for this fish pond to become.... I placed a golden idol. This little statue is probably a garage sale special, a Hindu God or Goddess. It sits in the typical lotus meditation pose. It once sat in my Uncle Tom's front yard. Once he passed, I took it. When I made the decision to take it, my mother asked, "What are you going to do with that?" A simple question that was asked in a tone of voice that I still recognize even after twenty years of not talking. There was a judgement statement mixed into that question. I choose to ignore it at the time, but I hear her voice when I look at that little statue. Something that should remind me to listen for the silence between my thoughts is instead setting off feelings of hurt, because she still doesn't understand. Something that should remind me of the love of my uncle, instead reminds me of the small mindedness of my mother, and others like her. Instead of reminding me that ALL IS DIVINE, I am hearing the recording of her voice. For some reason, the past few days I can't shake it. And so I write.... When I was growing up, my mom was an atheist. My assumption is that she is still is. I know she has heard that I attend church, and am a member even. I was raised atheist by her. Dad was raised a Seventh Day Adventist. His mother did not believe, his father did. My father believed. He stated

so, though he did not attend church. In this spiritual mess, I have had to find my own way. I was not taken to church even once as a child, my lessons came from a Catholic neighbor girl who told me I'd go to hell if I wasn't baptized. My guess is that my mother pictures me a small minded person. It's all I can think fits that judgement in her voice. She must picture me a Southern Baptist, or a member of some other fundamentalist Christian Sect. I feel a projection of herself falls onto me, I must be a follower who reads directions and gets a good result, but doesn't think beyond the result or it's consequences as I move along through life. Note to mom: The gal you gave birth to is actually a very deep thinker who does a LOT of research before she settles into much of anything. I look at a lot of sources of information before I make a commitment. This is **MY** spiritual quest. By the late 1980's I'd already shopped around for churches. I'd owned a concordance, a bible, and had taken several bible study courses. I knew all about Jesus, the Trinity, prophesy, Daniel, the Revelations, etc. etc. etc. I so wanted to be a Seventh Day Adventist like my father. I did try out a Southern Baptist Church. But, I could not buy into their idea of GOD. Depending on whom you talked to there was a judgement on the books of hell and damnation for most of human kind. What was the point of even trying if that was the ultimate outcome?? And the flip side of that was that GOD loved(s) us like a father (i.e. a parent) loves his child. If this is the case, how could he doom most of the the human race to hell? It didn't make sense to me. While attending college at Santa Rose Junior College, I took a comparative mythology class, and Native American Art Classes. It is amazing how much spiritualism is tied up in human artwork. I also took psychology classes. I read, I read, I read. I read studies and found out that one way or another the human brain is structured to believe and the brain is healthier when it BELIEVES. All of this was to add to knowledge I'd already gotten on my own from sources such as Alan Watts, and Joseph Campbell, etc., etc. In it's most simplistic form, religion is in a way, human kind's way of explaining their enviroment and existence. But, it is not that cut and dried. During this time, while in the process of a divorce, I also entered AA and Alanon, not because I was an alcoholic but because I was attracted to them and I saw it as a way to educate myself. I worked the 12-steps. At this point, I was taking my very first baby-steps to belief in the Divine. In 1998, I started attending a Disciples of Christ Church in Geyserville, CA. My initial motivation was my son. I was trying to instill some "good stuff." In the beginning, because I was so shy, and because I have had bad experiences with judgmental fundimentalists, I went in, sat there politely, and ran out when the service was over. Yes, over the long run it was there I met people who became my family, and a pastor who could finally explain things to me in a way that I understood, and could accept. ***Disciples of Christ is an "OPEN AND AFFIRMING" church and way of life. I could not have found a more loving home.***

Just a little side note here: No, I do not believe that civilization was built in seven literal days. Yes, I believe in metaphor for the sake of teaching. To paraphrase, "Open thy mind, & heart & all will be yours..."

In my process of finding GOD, I have learned that there is DIVINE in everything. Divinity is within us, as we were made in It's image. The fact that we breath at all is Divine, because at the

very least we can celebrate each day the fact that we ARE ALIVE. No matter what YOU call GOD, be it Shiva, Buddha, Mohammed, Jesus, the Eternal, the Blessed, The Word --no matter what you choose to call it, the bottom line is LOVE and Acceptance. The message of most of the world's religions (or myths as some believe) all share that common message that all is DIVINE and LOVE is the answer. The conclusion of all these experiences is that I have found that the Divine resides in and around all things. How simple is it to take that thought and look at a little golden Hindu statue , and know that it symbolizes someone's idea of The Divine?

Knowing this, could I not use it to remind myself to keep seeking a peaceful life, a peaceful mind, and a peaceful and loving spirit? How could looking at that little statue not remind me of my uncle's love which was so generously provided -- and indeed, one of the more beautiful and loving experiences of my life. I'm very happy feeling peaceful, knowing that whatever GOD is, in soul and spirit that *It's* bottom line is Love, and Acceptance. And that this God is big enough to realize that humans need to see him/her in many different forms, and follow on many different paths. Different but not wrong. Your path is different from mine, but it does not elevate you over me.