

“Hello...it’s God. You’re stressed out.”

A Light-Hearted Look at Communicating with the Divine.



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About three weeks ago, through a series of unexpected events, I found myself laying on my back on my bedroom floor, my throbbing head propped up uncomfortably against my bed, paralyzed; paralyzed from stress. It was not as severe as having absolutely no sensation in my body. If you poked me with a pin, I would have said “Ouch.” My body just decided to shut down, my legs gave out, and my stability and ego left me. It was like a conscious fainting spell. Regardless of the physiology of the experience, this was a new experience for me and I was very, very scared. As it turned out, I was human after all. So much for the Superman cape and boots I was bidding for on E-bay.

I believe in the Divine. I believe in Divine guidance, Divine strength, and the Divine unfolding of life. Whatever your spiritual belief system, the Divine can be many things to many people and we connect with the Divine through various means: silent meditation, prayer, reading Holy Scripture and sacred writings, singing, writing, etc ... How we receive messages from the Divine is different from one person to the next, from one moment to the next. Take a minute and reflect now on how you communicate with the Divine. How do you hear and receive Divine messages? In what ways does God speak to you? Are we tuned into the Divine frequency, or are we listening to a different channel when God is trying to send us a message? It is like talking on a cell phone with a poor connection. You know the other person is there, you just cannot make out what they are saying.

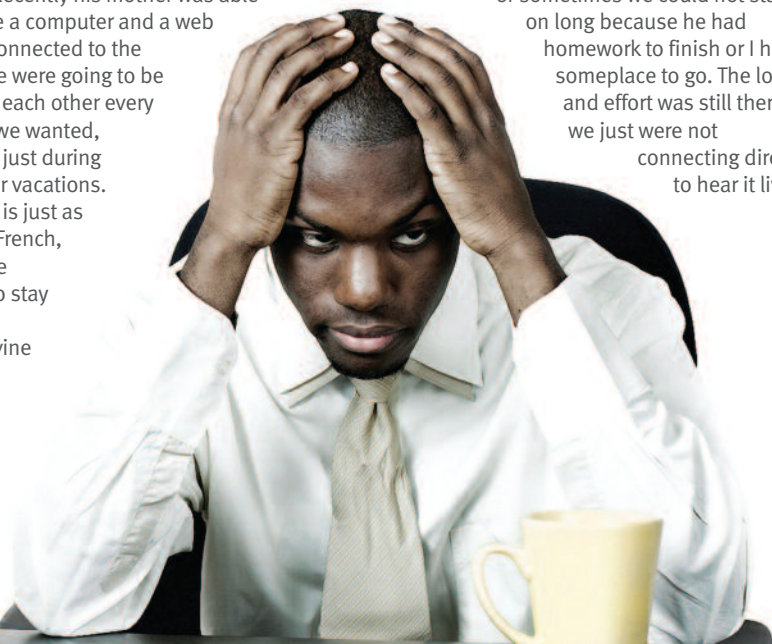
I have worked with many clients on this point; how we receive Divine messages to improve our situation, know our life purpose, and navigate our spiritual path. Sometimes our thinking can be very one-dimensional for many things. This does not allow for a variety of possibilities and varying perspectives in any situation, including messages from the Divine. Maybe God speaks to us when we are silent and still,

maybe we are expecting a lightening bolt to zap us during clear skies, or maybe we are waiting for a message in our voicemail from God telling us what to do, where to go, and how to get there (when I was a young teen, this somehow made sense to me). Whatever the circumstance or your belief system, how we open to, hear, and receive Divine messages is just as important as asking.

My almost 12-year-old son Roman has lived in France for the last nine years now. I miss him terribly. There is not a day that goes by that I do not feel anguish and joy, all within the same sentence. Recently his mother was able to purchase a computer and a web cam, and connected to the Internet. We were going to be able to see each other every day now if we wanted, rather than just during our summer vacations. His English is just as bad as my French, but we have managed to stay connected through Divine love and conviction.

This last Wednesday, November 28th, we finally coordinated enough to hook up via web-cams and see each other, over half a continent and an ocean away. Technology can be a wonderful gift. He was just as happy to see me and all we could do for the first few minutes was wave and smile at each other. Being a “Web-cam Dad” is better than being a “Phone Dad” for sure.

During the week following, we had trouble connecting because of the time difference (he was “online” when I was “off-line” and vice versa) and when we did connect, we could not always hear each other, or sometimes we could not stay on long because he had homework to finish or I had someplace to go. The love and effort was still there, we just were not connecting directly to hear it live.



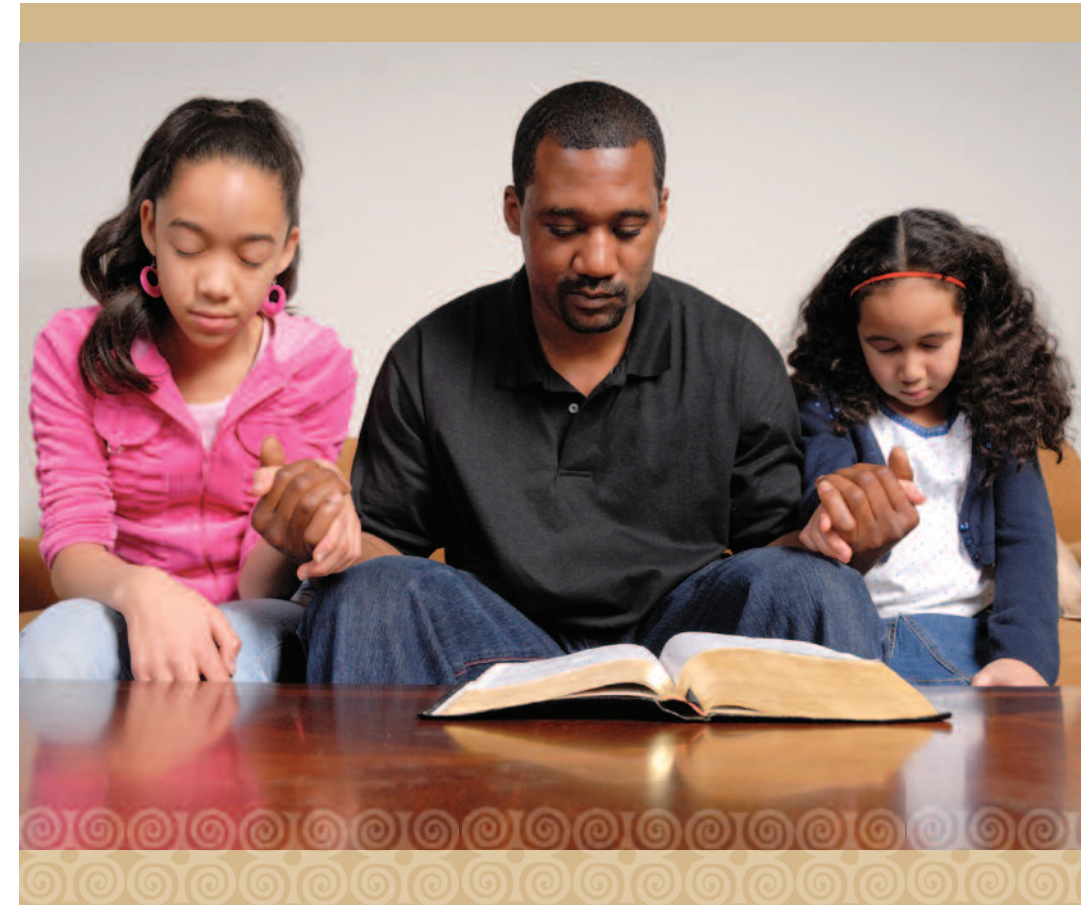
For us, it was a matter of timing, organizing our schedules, and fixing some of the “technical glitches”. I often see the same type of scenario played out when I pray, and when God answers.

God speaks to us in many ways. Some messages are more obvious than others are, some are right in front of our face, some require us to do some digging. Our truths often lay somewhere in between. It might be a feeling or sense deep inside that tells us we are on the right or wrong path. It might be a visceral sensation in your body: “butterflies” in your stomach, muscle tightness, acute abdominal pain, a headache, or tears of joy or sorrow. It might be message from a friend or mentor, a fender-bender (minor car collision), a good laugh or a giggle fit, or a crashed computer. If I have body pains from stress, then I am probably doing too much. If I crashed my car, then I was probably speeding or not paying attention. If something brought me to tears of joy and happiness, then I was open to appreciate the Divine unfolding of life. Whatever the circumstance, experience, or the means, the messages are there and were probably there for a while.

As I lay there on my bedroom floor, it was as if God called me up and said, “Hello ... it’s God. You’re stressed out. Try something different.” At that point, I shook hands with the inevitable. If I did not change my situation and circumstance in a hurry, things could and would get worse. That, and the fact that my soft and cushy carpet was in need of a vacuum and my windows needed cleaning. Strange the things you notice when you change your point of view and your perspective.

I picked up the phone that lay beside me on the floor and started dialling the “1-800-Dearest-God-Please-Help-Me” hotline (i.e., prayer). I do not think I am alone in this. Some of us only pray and/or ask for Divine guidance when we are under significant amounts of stress and have seemingly reached our breaking point: “Hello, this is the 911 emergency line — would you like Police, Fire, Ambulance, or God?”

“God please, and can you patch me right though — I’m stuck in my head.” Some of us even add the extra line: “If you help me out of this, I swear I will never...” (“...do it again”, “...ask for another thing” — or whatever form of pleading fits for you).



Humour is an escape for many of us experiencing stress, but I will not hide anything from you.

Even as I write this passage, I can feel the residue of stress deep within the fibre of my being, plucking the chords of my nerves. It is a very intense feeling; helplessness, fear, powerlessness, and wonder all wrapped up into one experience. Maybe some of you can relate.

In the last three weeks, I have tried everything I know to relieve my body and my life of stress. I have jogged, exercised at the gym with weights, sat in a hot tub for hours, listened to music, prayed, talked with friends, and so on. What I have found to be most effective form of stress relief for me is to write. What works for you when you have reached the wall? When you have reached the point of breakthrough (I prefer this term to “break-down”). I encourage you to take another moment to acknowledge how you de-stress. You might even consider writing some of these points down for future stress reference.

My 77 year-old mother, God bless her soul, prays for everything from choosing the right toothpaste to paying the bills at the end of the month. Every now and then, she will open her mailbox and there will be \$20 in a sealed envelope with no name on it. Sometimes I wonder if she claims “Divine gifts” as income on her taxes. I think I will ask her just to see what she says. Some of you, like my mother, have made connecting with the Divine a habitual part of each and everyday and are enjoying the Divine fruits of your labours of love; a very sound practice from my perspective. I have not been so dedicated, but I am starting to see the light, even through my dirty windows. Blessings to you and yours.

Have a question or comment for Derrick? Email info@derrickshirley.com and your question may be addressed in his next column of our next issue.