

In the True Spirit of Community

Deborah Jones

At the core of every human heart lives a longing – a longing to be part of something larger or greater than oneself. At the same time, in the midst of bustling cities, large work forces, cyber-relationships around the world, even within our own families, we can feel isolated and alone. We might wonder, what am I really connected to? What do I believe in? Where can I go to feel supported? How can I explore the deeper purpose of my life and my own potential? We hear about the importance of being part of a community, yet because our western culture values individualism as much as it values life, we likely don't understand or trust the concept of community.

When you hear the word “community” what comes to mind? Do you feel curious, indifferent, or do you want to run the other way? Do you imagine individuals drawn together around a shared purposefulness only later to feel disillusioned by group dynamics? Do you think in order to be part of a community you must check your individuation at the door and become like-minded? Does the thought of community leave you feeling restricted or hemmed in by ideas?

In the true spirit of community, individuality and consensus-building toward common goals is valued over conformity. Like-hearted rather than like-minded individuals seek out each other's points of view for perspective and balance. The community is alive and spacious.

My spiritual sister, Sobonfu Some, is internationally known for teaching and demonstrating the importance of the true spirit of community. During her all-too-short life, Sobonfu taught thousands that community is an environment where “*you can find a home in each other's hearts and souls*”. She reminded us that a community has a responsibility to every member - to insist that each individual “eat more light” in order to grow into his or her full potential. In other words, the community recognizes that its spiritual and emotional health is in direct relationship to the spiritual and emotional maturity of each community member. If one person in the community is suffering, the community suffers. Imagine how our lives and world might change if we came together to support each other in such a way.

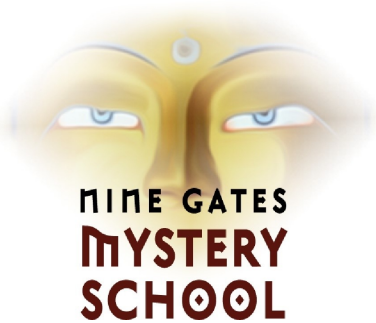


*Community is a living entity with spirit as its anchor;
where a group of people are empowered by each other
to carry out their purpose and use their power responsibly.*

Sobonfu Some

Within the true spirit of community, conflict can arise. In fact, conflict has value to a healthy, spirit-filled group when that conflict is met and resolved with emotional stability and well-practiced communication skills. In the villages of Africa, conflict is seen as a timely gift sent by Spirit to clear obscurations in their lives. The villagers would say that conflict arrives to crack open hidden thoughts, interpretations and stuck energies. Without skillful conflict, a community could become stagnant, rigid, and cease to function organically. In the true spirit of community, the way conflict is approached and resolved is a barometer measuring the state of maturity of its members and the community itself.

There's something old and ancient in our bodies that tells us community has its place in our lives. That ancient thing brings us together when a child is born or when death is near. On 9/11, the United States rallied in a communal outpouring of compassion and support. Just last month as Notre Dame was burning, the world collectively recognized the church as a symbol of the dream of peace, rather than the reality of religions at war. Our communal heart cried. Each time we see beyond our perceived differences and stand for the human spirit and the lessening of suffering for all sentient beings, what shows up? A collective heart sewn together in the true spirit of community.



At the **Nine Gates Mystery School**, we study the human energy system where each chakra is experientially investigated. Our sense of belonging and being connected resides in the belly center (the second chakra).

When this chakra is open and highly functioning, we reconnect to our source of truth and healing. We're able to make healthy, honest connections with each other without the need to dominate or conform. We begin to understand we are not separate from each other, and that the collective (the community) is a source of support, nourishment, and loving challenges to grow. We feel alive! We learn to trust ourselves and each other again.

This short article isn't about *how* to create a community. There are hundreds of books with techniques for doing just that. Rather, this article reminds us that learning to live in the true spirit of community, within the larger community of human beings and our planet, is a worthwhile endeavor. It reminds us that community is about relationship, where our longing to belong is turned inward and experienced first within our own forgiving hearts. I find that forgiveness and self-forgiveness are a fine place to start.

Self-Forgiveness Meditation Link

https://ninegates.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ForgivenessPractice_with-Music-2019.mp3

The energy of that earnest, heart-centered longing and our inner wakefulness are capable of allowing us, and other individuals far-flung in miles, to maintain a profound connection of heart, spirit, and a commitment to live more compassionately, more kind and more awake. I want to be part of that commitment.

How would it feel to share your trials, successes, joys and sorrows with individuals who truly are invested in you; who hold as part of their own purposefulness a responsibility to help you live into, and serve from, your gifts? We can create this reality for ourselves and those around us. In the true spirit of community, each person is invaluable and irreplaceable. That means so are you.

Deborah Jones bio:

Deborah Jones is the Executive Director of Nine Gates Programs, Inc., serving as the spiritual leader and primary teacher of the Mystery Schools and other Graduate Programs. She is also the Founder of Nine Gates new 11-day experience, the Esoteric School. Deborah has worked intensely with wisdom keepers from around the world, practicing the healing arts, shamanism, the integrative application of the Hindu and Buddhist tantric paths, tribal trance dance, the transpersonal psychology of spiritual awakening through the energy and emotional bodies, and other ancient arts of the wisdom tradition schools.

Deborah serves as a cornerstone of the Nine Gates' Graduate community. Her vision is that every human being finds such community support and is ceaselessly asked to eat more light!

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