**OSS Conference Name** – Spiritual Beliefs Across the Generations

**Date** – 16 April 2022

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**Session Topic –** What is true love and can we know when we experience it?

**Session Notes -**

* Emotions, tied to negative aspects like fear, shame and guilt, bind us to the past and do not allow us to be love in every moment
* Treating others with kindness even when they may appear brusque or inconsiderate and giving them the benefit of the doubt because we don’t know what’s going on with them helps to build a loving space – assume the best intention in every interaction
* Acts of service are an expression of love while expecting nothing in return
* Learning to love yourself helps forge loving bonds with others

**Session Topic -** What experiences shape our spiritual understandings and where do we go from here?

**Session Notes –**

* Different Upbringings
  + Traditional religious experience
  + Research on the Internet and participating in spirit-related associations
  + Foreign country upbringing with different cultural backgrounds
  + Spiritual living associating with other spiritual people
  + Volunteer work with like-minded people
  + People who wear spirit-related jewelry – sparking a conversation
  + Almost every other person I meet has a spiritual background
  + Recovering Catholic – was going to be a nun. Could not consider alternatives until after leaving the denomination. It’s hard to participate with family who do not believe
    - Reluctance / refusal to take communion
    - Limitations on what women can do in church
    - Limitations on what you can discuss in church
  + Had spiritual experiences when I was young, but suppressed it.
  + Grew up in a religious family, preacher’s kid (PK). Took classes that made me think more critically, which created questions. Seeking.
* The significance of synchronicities
  + Animals appearing to people after loved ones have passed
  + Meeting people who become significant in our life or provide meaning
    - Having significant conversations with people you casually meet
  + We need to be more open to seeing and sensing things around us
* CC was created to help people seek / explore alternatives
* The breadth of experiences people are having is skyrocketing.
  + Jennifer Kaitlin – the number of people who are seeking her out is growing.
* People go to church for the community but they don’t necessarily agree with what they believe.
  + Four things religion or spirituality provide – community, ritual, meaning and purpose
* How can we come closer to God?
* Groups of people operate in silos – we need to help them cross silos, to better understand how people in other silos (science, theology, metaphysics) have experienced and what they are thinking.
* Regarding how / what people think as people climbing up Maslow’s hierarchy of needs
  + Jesus – love and belonging
  + Esteem is next – we are learning to value our own and others beliefs and perspectives
  + Self-actualization – we each have a piece of God in us