

THE GAME OF LIFE

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This article is an opportunity to look at some principles that likely are useful and I'd say we've come to know and understand through our Rosicrucian studies about life. The reason why I've titled this "The Game of Life" is because in many ways, for most of humanity, most human beings, they likely—before getting acquainted with the Rosicrucian Order or other mystical teachings—find themselves in the middle of this experience, this kind of live game, so to speak, and really without an understanding of what's going on in it.

This seems to me very much like coming to watch some sort of a game – an athletic game or other kind of game—and trying to make sense of it if you haven't been introduced to the objectives of the game and the rules of the game. I think that's the case, unfortunately, for the overwhelming majority of humanity. We kind of find ourselves in this experience called life. The stakes seem fairly high and we don't really have too much understanding of: What are the rules of the game? How is this thing organized? What's the objective?

Religion, in many cases, plays this role of suggesting to people what they think is going on behind this experience that we call life. However, for much of humanity, there nevertheless is no confidence in what's being shared with them, in part because, obviously, there are contradictory things when you compare it across religions. The do's and don'ts can be in exact opposition in some cases, though there are some fairly universal thoughts across religions. At the

same time, people, nevertheless, have to struggle their way through without the certainty of knowing what is going on.

So, to me, you could easily equate it to a game that you come across, but in order to participate successfully in a game, you must know the objectives of the game and the governing principles of its rules. Without that understanding—and this is just really the case with life for most people—the play on the field will seem confusing, and as a player on the field, one will not be successful.



Now, the good news about this game of life is that everybody wins. There are no losers; everybody wins.

Actually, the only person you have to beat in this game is your lower self. So, there are no losers, everybody wins in reality. The real competition is looking at how to incorporate, transcend, and truly incarnate the spiritual self—the soul—and its expression through one's mundane everyday existence. So, in looking at guiding principles, what's the value? Ultimately, we need to know where we're going and how best to get there. I think what we take away from our studies, our Rosicrucian studies, our own inner pursuits of the mystical journey, and our own seeking of answers to life can be related to a saying that's been put in many different ways and different languages: "Knock and the door will be opened; Seek and you shall find."

So, for people who have taken this on, whether through something like Rosicrucian studies or otherwise, they

come to awareness of the question: What's the goal?

In our Rosicrucian studies, as well as related things, you can call the goal coming to the awareness of and identification with the immaterial nature of our being, instead of the physical material aspect of ourselves—which is really just an outer envelope for the expression of being or consciousness. This awareness of and identification with the immaterial nature of our being—which we call the soul quite commonly—is the goal instead of the physical material aspect of ourselves, which is just an outer envelope for the expression of being or consciousness.

If we think about it, most of humanity has it backward. This is no fault of our own, because this would surely seem to be an evolutionary process for all of us, not simply a physical evolution, but an inner evolution as well. Most people think that the goal of life is centered around the physical and material aspect of themselves. In terms of our goals and aspirations, instead of being conscious of the objects of consciousness—basically the things that our senses bring us—it's better to be more conscious of consciousness itself.

The last point I'd make about this in terms of guiding goals is, knowing and understanding our goals enables us to identify and understand the obstacles in our path and the ways to accelerate our progress. So, unless you know your goals, you really are not going to understand and address the obstacles in your path and accelerate your progress.

That's the background to some principles, some ideas around things that one can over time observe to be features of

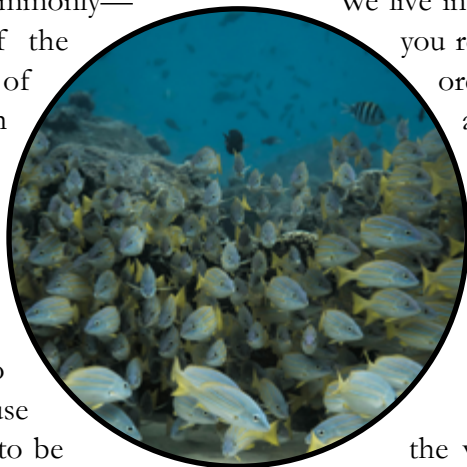
this existence that we call life, this certain conscious existence of earthly experience.

I would say one of the most important things is to recognize that life is intelligent. So, life is this intelligence. It permeates all that there is, all that we're conscious of, as well as those things that we're not conscious of. This intelligence is the foundational piece of life or the expression of life. We see the same intelligence through millions of life forms. So, we live in a sea of life.

We live in a sea of intelligence. If you recognize that the cosmic order is this intelligence in action, you may realize that this intelligence is our own expression of and responsiveness to our environment and the thoughts that we're able to entertain.

So, this intelligence, in the words of Psalm 139, is everywhere. No matter how far down in the ocean I go, no matter the highest mountain, etc., thou art there. So, this life, and I don't mean the idea of the breathing life, but this notion of existence is intelligence. It permeates everything. We live in a sea of intelligence. In the words of Luke from the Acts of the Apostles: "In him [the Divine] we live and move and are." So, life is permeated by a universal and imminent intelligence. It's all around us.

The universality of it accounts for the precision of karma, the regulation of our bodies, the regulation of things in the universe. These cosmic laws are this intelligence in action. A cosmic law is not some sort of physical object that you pick up. Cosmic laws are this intelligence in action, in our bodies, in our own awareness, and in the material universe that we see. Life, as we know, is responsive. One of the things that we say if something's alive is, it responds.



This life—whether it be the life that you can see manifested through material forms or not—this life, this intelligence, is responsive. It's responsive to every one of our thoughts, our desires, our actions, both individually and collectively. This brings us back to the idea of karma. Karma is the responsiveness of this life. I'd say one of the great indications of the eminence of it is the precision of karma, of how and when it comes. Karmic actions or reactions don't have to be what we consider to be unpleasant, but you can see how exact it is. It is exact to the cause.

We're cautioned, I guess. In the Bible it says, and I'm sure something similar is in many other holy books: Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. This supports the idea that all of our human justice is going to be inexact. Cosmic or karmic justice acts as a balancing, correcting force. It's precise. It's exact, and it does it without harming those things around it. So, it's kind of the ultimate laser focus. It's for you. It's exactly for you. Whereas, when humans try to carry these things out, there are consequences beyond the initial kind of motivation for the act.

We kind of go at things with a bit of a sledgehammer as compared to the precision of this cosmic intelligence. Perhaps when we were children we may have thought of the idea of the Divine somehow watching all eight billion people.

We imagine the Divine is watching them all individually and keeping track, and, I guess, has a giant blackboard up there and is writing stuff on it, etc.; It then kind of picks out what to do.

Imagine instead that the whole thing is all intelligence. In scientific terms, they call that distributed processing. It's not just in one central thing, just like in our bodies. There are estimated to be thirty-seven trillion cells in our bodies. We are not individually trying to keep track of thirty-seven trillion cells and their actions and all the other things that they must do to, you know, keep harmony in themselves and stay in harmony with the larger cells and tissues around the organism. This intelligence is distributed; it's eminent in all things.

I love the modernist phrase describing this intelligence: "The universal but unmanifest force, invisibly diffused throughout the whole." You can't see it; it is invisibly distributed throughout the whole. So a question arises: "Where can I go and you are not there?" If you look at the accounts of individuals who have experienced either momentary or more sustained feelings of Cosmic Consciousness, one of the identifying hallmarks that have generally been associated with this and used as a hallmark of Cosmic Consciousness experience is the realization that we exist in a sea of intelligence. It's all intelligence.



Eight billion of us humans, not to mention the animals and other things, we're all having emotions and thoughts and all that stuff. "How does It keep track of it?" one might ask. Well, it's because this intelligence is universal. It's within our breath, it's everything. So, keep in mind, there's no hiding from this intelligence, and it's not because it's the Divine up in the sky. We are part of It. It is what makes us up. You know, the modernist term for the Divine is Omneity, the everything—omni, the all, the everything.

The first thing to keep in mind is we live in this sea of intelligence. We are constantly inhaling and exhaling in this sea of intelligence. So, everything we do, every thought that we think, all kind of take place in this sea of consciousness, this intelligence that kind of governs the order of all things.

Another one of these principles is that the material world is a world of forms. Change governs all forms. How we look today isn't the same as how we will look ten years from now. What is progress today will be grossly out of date tomorrow. What is ascendant today will be unimportant tomorrow.

All forms are transitory. The material world is a world of forms. So, it kind of tells us don't latch on to the forms. And the Master Jesus had an excellent way of expressing this. He said, "Do not hoard your treasures on earth where moth and earthworms consume them."

So if you were holding on to all those iPhone 5's thinking, "Oh, I'll keep these; these are valuable," well, they're not worthy any longer of landfill. So, we want to recognize that all the things we see outside of ourselves are constantly

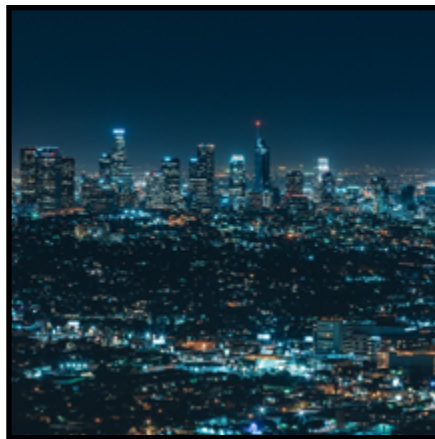
changing. We may not recognize the change immediately because changes can be slow and somewhat imperceptible to our eyes and our observation. However, when you come home to it or you look at it five years later or ten years later, you might say, "Wow, that was so important five years ago, and, now, who thinks of it?"

Keep in mind that this material world is a world of forms, and by their nature, they are transitory. We need to look at the permanent, not the impermanent. There's a very important thing about form; this is the way that Being expresses Itself. If we think about that related to our Rosicrucian ontology, we hear in a Rosicrucian convocation: "Being was without reflection and therefore formless...Being took sentient form." Form is the way being expresses Itself. We can't see It except through Its expression. Form conditions the expression of being.

If we look at the vast array of living creatures and entities, they're countless and innumerable. Each of those is an expression of being. It takes on these various and sundry ways of expressing Itself. We need to recognize that all of this is being and expression. There's

nothing but being; this is how being expresses Itself to our sentient awareness. There are other ways of being aware of It, outside of the senses. The ways of being aware outside the senses are part of sentience, but are not determined by the senses.

We want to keep in mind that the destiny of all forms is to break down, but being expresses Itself through forms. Being was originally without reflection and therefore formless. So the unmanifest became the manifest. The forms are



like a kaleidoscope, ever-changing. The important thing is not to become attached to the forms.

So, the question that we could consider is: What hasn't changed during our lifetimes? It's not our appearance. It's not where we lived. It's not even our friendships. And in most cases, not our loved ones. Some are here and some are not any longer.

So, the question might be: Why do we cling to things that we can visibly see will not remain the same? I think most people would say the most profound thing that we learn through the teachings of the Buddha is do not become attached to forms because they change. So, then what is useful to do is to look at what hasn't changed. What's the one thing that hasn't changed in our lives? That's that point of realization, the "I am," being. That's the one motionless mover, the eternal cause of all, the thing in the center that is still, is the "I am," being. That's who you are. That's who I am. That's who we are.

Being is the only constant. Descartes kind of got at this with his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in which he concluded, "*cogito, ergo sum*" ("I think, therefore I am"). That's the only absolute known. Everything else can be pushed to the side and questioned and dismissed. Because if you question it thoroughly enough, you will see it's just a transitory thing. The one thing that is the unchanging part, that is the same as when you were two years old, is the "I," and that "I" is the expression of the Cosmic. That is being. We share being in being.

This is also reflected in the Judeo-Christian tradition, where we're told in some translations of the Bible, "Be still and know that I am God [the Divine]." It's in that "going within," when we actually adjust to resting in being, not looking at what we're doing tomorrow, not dealing with the sensory things, that being is the eternal. That's the part that survives transition, one of the very many transits we have in life. Our bodies are very different from when we were five and six years old. It's conventionally said that our bodies—the cells in our body—change over every seven years, but we are the same person. The "I" is the same. The locus of awareness is the same.



Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin

So that's who we are, and that's the doorway. To quote Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin: "Through the door which the Divine goes out of Itself, It enters the human soul. And the door by which the human soul goes out of itself, it enters the understanding." That awareness is the unchanging aspect of ourselves. That's the actuality of ourselves,

and that's the thing we want to dwell in as we get to know self, which is truly the only constant, the only absolute. Everything is just simply an experience and consciousness of being.

Even this experience you're having now reading this and the experience I'm having now are just experiences in consciousness. We learn in our Rosicrucian teachings that there is no space. Everything we may believe we are seeing and touching are things outside of ourselves, but they're just experiences in our consciousness at the end of the day. With the right stimulation of parts of the brain you could replicate that



experience. Ultimately, even this reality is just an experience in consciousness, which is basically what Descartes's *Meditations* was going after. He concluded that the only thing that he knew could exist with certainty is that if he was thinking or feeling, he must exist. We want to turn our conscious inward to dwell upon that.

Another principle I wanted to share is the laws of the material world versus the higher laws of the spiritual world.

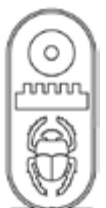
Forms are transitory, part of the material world. Consciousness is eternal, outside of time. There is one of the distinctions. Forms respond to the law of transition. They come and go, versus the laws of life or consciousness. The laws of the material world are centered around things breaking down. It's kind of basic physics, something called entropy. Things can break down into the most random configurations.

When we apply the laws of consciousness of the spiritual aspect of our being, and we move our attention and intentional resources from that part, from the material side of self and objective side of self, to this other part, we see that things are built up. It brings order to our world and those things around us, to our lives. There's a great power in focusing on our spiritual nature of being as compared

to our material identity. The more we turn our consciousness inward, the more that we dwell in the awareness of this spiritual aspect of ourselves, the more likely it is we will see actually that which would seem to be miraculous, and virtually impossible from an objective point of view, take place in our lives and take place around us.

While we have to live in the material world, our goal is to not be preoccupied with it as the primary seed of our awareness, the primary thing that draws our attention. Because when we do, when we live by the material world, we live by the laws of the material world, which are very much around things breaking down, and a good deal of it is very transitory. With that building up and breaking down, it can be very uncomfortable. As we turn our awareness toward our spiritual self, the soul consciousness in us, paying attention to it, it doesn't have to be a revolution overnight. Just commune with it; communing with conscious awareness of it attunes you.

Many of our Rosicrucian exercises are designed to attune us with this other aspect of self. Many people have likely encountered a situation where it's been recommended to us that things might be very inharmonious around us. We might find ourselves in some



physical circumstances which are quite inharmonious and perhaps we cannot immediately leave it. The best thing to do is to use our Rosicrucian tools. It can be the Rosicrucian sign that we make mentally, or it could be other things, but simply, it is becoming aware of our spiritual nature—which is what those things bring us back to.

When I say “spiritual,” I mean the soul nature. The word *spiritual* may have a lot of different ideas surrounding it, but this aspect of soul, of who we are, is a connection to an extension of the Eternal.

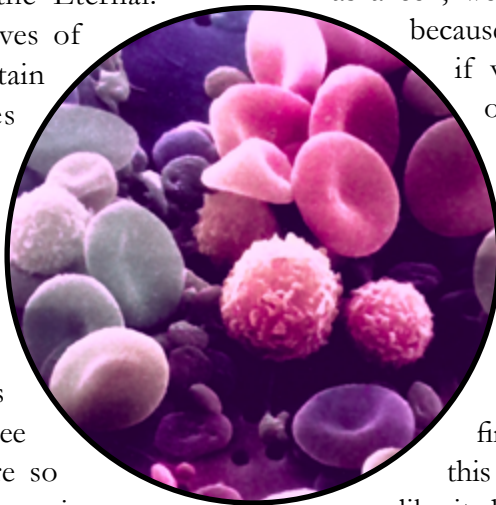
Just reminding ourselves of that brings about certain effects in our lives and our immediate surroundings. So, the more we keep our eye and attention focused on that aspect of our nature, the more we see how harmonious life becomes. You will see things happen that are so beyond the odds of happening, and they will happen in our lives regularly. They will be things that demonstrate that order, that harmony.

I was having a conversation last week with a young woman who’s on her own journey, a mystical journey, and she was describing how by spending the time working internally, life had brought things to her. She described things happening “with a bow on them.”

That really is the fruit of the higher governing the lower. As we turn our attunement to this higher aspect of self, we’ll see that, in the material world, consciousness brings order. You pull consciousness out of the body, the body breaks down. As soon as life leaves the body, consciousness largely leaves with it. With no soul connection to it, the body

breaks down. Consciousness brings order. As we really turn our attention inwardly toward our consciousness, we will see it manifest those ways in our life.

The next cosmic law I want to discuss is the principle of unity. We think all things, all forms of expression, are of the same divine essence and are therefore one. This is likely the most important principle to recognize. It is all one. We are connected with all expression of life and reality, and are no different than being cells in a larger body. If we only act on behalf of ourselves



as a cell, we act to our detriment, because in a very myopic way, if we just go and further our own experience and expression; we can damage the organism.

That’s like a cancer in the body, if we live our lives that way. However, at the same time, what you will find is this cosmic essence, this cosmic intelligence. Just like it does in the body, it will go look to basically dissolve, remove, and eliminate that which brings disunity and harmony. If we don’t try to understand that all things are connected, that it’s all an expression of the same thing, it is no different than an infant who doesn’t realize their foot is a part of their body until they bite it. They do their best to bite it by putting their little toe in their mouth. They go, “Oh! Wow! That hurts.” Well, it’s part of you.

We do not realize, to any meaningful extent, our connections with others. We begin to feel it through our heart, and very often, obviously, through our families. Then our awareness can grow. However, when we recognize that the Divine is one, that It is all one, we then conduct ourselves differently or we move toward conducting





ourselves differently. You have to beat that other opponent, which is the material self, to some degree, in this game. It has its own influence, but you should want to move toward expressing the realization of that unity.

Very often, people would say this realization of unity, this connectedness we know as love is the energy that unites all things. It's the opposite of separation. In psychological terms, you might say love is the signpost to the object of unity. We feel this great feeling because we are feeling connected. We're realizing our nature, that we are one with all these living things, all these expressions. As we feel that, that feeling of love leads us there, takes us there, sustains us there.

It's like a hungry person enjoying the taste of food. They realize, "Ah, that tastes good." Love tells us and reinforces for us this realization of unity. We should keep in mind that we have to develop away from the self as this myopic "just little me"—this identification with the physical body which is limited; it has boundaries and borders to it—and allow ourselves to basically recognize our connection to all living things. They're all trying to do what we're trying to do. They're all trying to realize that connection to living things. We respond with what we call love, because we feel that unity, that oneness.

That likely is the most undergirding principle of how to succeed at this experience that we call life, by recognizing the unity and acting out of that recognition. We know it doesn't come overnight. It's a marathon, not a short game. It's a game of cricket; it's a long game. As we progressively move ourselves in that direction, we see the fruit of it. So, we want to realize this principle of unity. It likely is the most important or salient thing to take on our journey. We have to work around the differences in expression and realize, no, it's one thing expressed in many, many forms. There are multitudinous expressions of unity, because it is multitudinous in its nature. We are often distracted by the differences in its appearance, but it's all the same thing expressing itself.

Evolution is a universal principle; that includes the expression of consciousness in living things. It's this principle of becoming incarnate. When we say incarnate, we mean it's sharing these other levels of vibration in physical form. Progressively, it expresses more and more of its nature. We know our job—as we Rosicrucians say, the unfolding of the rose—is expressing progressively the nature of the soul, which is aware of its oneness. We become aware of its oneness and are part of that one divine principle.



There's this evolution; it moves us away from the transitory to the eternal. Life is constantly moving us away from, "false deities." A false deity can be anything. It's not just a statue; it can be something you become so materially fixated on that now instead of doing the work you're really here for—which is to bring about the expression of your soul through your body and yourself and your personality—instead you're focused on something else. The other beautiful thing about this is that free will, which humans exhibit to definitely a distinctive degree, may be present in other living creatures on Earth as well, not to mention the things outside of Earth. Free will enables us to either resist or speed up this process of spiritual evolution.

We can actively participate. That's one of the great gifts that we as human beings have. We're able to actively participate in our evolution. Either way, you're going to evolve. There's no question you're going to evolve. Evolution governs all kingdoms, including this expression and humanity of this soul nature. We have an opportunity through free will to advance that which actually makes for a much more pleasant human experience as well. This evolution was described in a quote attributed to Seneca the Younger (ca. 4 BCE-65 CE): "Those who will not walk voluntarily, the fates will drag."

That's really just pointing out that this evolution is going to go on no matter what. You can either cooperate with it and really take advantage of the time we're here on Earth in this earthly consciousness to accelerate this evolution, or you can resist it. Generally, resistance is fairly painful. It is not highly recommended.

Consciousness determines our experience. As you shift the balance of your consciousness toward awareness of your spiritual, immaterial aspect of your being, your life will move away from seeming randomness and intermittent harmony to sustained harmony.

As we shift our consciousness toward awareness of the spiritual immaterial aspect of our being, we will see that we are not subject to the random things that beset a lot of lives. Many are vulnerable to randomness because of the lack of harmony in their existence. This reminds me of the story of the prodigal son. Originally, the son of the wealthy guy says, "I want my money," and he takes it, and goes off. Things go downhill, and eventually he's eating with the pigs.

Then the line is, "He came unto himself." He realized his own nature. Then, upon that realization, eventually he returned to the home—to the principle—from which he comes. There was celebration.





We have that opportunity. We can use our free will to accelerate this. The more we stay in this awareness of the spiritual aspect in ourselves that underlies reality—because that’s what’s behind reality, there’s this intelligence and spiritual intelligence behind reality—we’ll see how reality will organize itself in response to that in a way that manifests harmony for us.

One of my favorite metaphors about this journey is the work of the lapidary. Basically, it’s the person who polishes stones, often using a tumbler. In that, we’re all kind of in this lapidary tumbler, which is a canister that turns very slowly with a lot of stones in it, along with a bit of grit and a little bit of fluid. The stones polish one another. That thing may turn for thirty days all day and all night, very, very slowly.

Then after those thirty days, they open the canister up. They empty out the water. They rinse out the grit. They take out the stones that are still very rough and put them to the side. They then put finer grit in, along with more water, and they close it back up, and then it turns again. The fine stones continue to polish the other fine stones, but the coarser stones are removed because they would damage the fine stones, and they would go back into being in another tumbler, rubbing to bring about this evolution and development.

Karma is our feedback loop. The pace of karma speeds up now that we’re on the path, and we’re very fortunate. We

are really blessed. The other good part though, is that you being blessed or anyone being blessed doesn’t take away from an opportunity. Everyone can be blessed. We all are, in the words of Saint-Martin, assembled around the circumference of a circle. We all have different circumstances to our lives, but we are all equidistant from that spiritual center. So every one of us, by turning there, can have the same experience that doesn’t take away from anyone else.

The last point I would make is from Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin: Each person’s life is an individual puzzle with its own unique answers. That’s truly why we have to study our own lives and see what life is teaching us, what life is telling us at a given moment, to look at how we evolve. It doesn’t all happen overnight. It’s an evolution. Our beloved former Emperor Ralph Lewis said, “Evolution, not revolution, leads to lasting change.” That’s what happens with us, right? But we have to search and look at our own lives and look at those things that are next in our life to help us evolve.

Peace Profound, and let us all just give thanks to have been lucky enough to put our feet on this beloved path of the Rosicrucian Order!

Video

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