

Respecting Our Urges

by Stewart Blackburn

Urges are ordinary experiences that most of us encounter several times a day. They are spontaneous calls to action of some sort. They may be trivial or they may seem enormous. They may be about food or sex or about “getting away” or to connect with someone. Whatever they are “about” they all share some important commonalities.

For one thing, urges are very focused. The thing that we want so much in that moment is the only thing we can clearly see in front of us. In that moment, essentially nothing else exists and we must have it or do it. This is why grocers place popular small goodies by the cash registers. We see some candy and we get the urge to eat it so we immediately add it to our groceries right there. Often we can’t change our focus until we have acted on that urge. Something about that object or person speaks to a part of us that desperately wants to have it.

Secondly, urges demand immediate action, hence the word, *urgent*. One way of looking at urges is that they are an expression of a deep desire that comes from our passionate core and manages to break through the everyday repression of those passions. While an urge to buy a chocolate at the checkout counter may seem innocuous enough, it is likely that, overshadowed by the concerns of the day, there is a massive desire for feeling good and nurtured. It is as though we are afraid that if we don’t act now, we will lose that opportunity to meet that deep inner need. It is interesting to note that when we are feeling good in general, urges don’t seem to be as frequent or as strong.

Urges are calls to wholeness, like things that intrigue us, our daydreams, and our sexual fantasies. They are signals that a part of us wants our attention. What that need for attention is, precisely, needs to be discovered in each case. But the signals are fairly basic. There is a desire there for something, some kind of experience or expression. Once

we are aware that there is such a desire there, then we can give ourselves permission, or not, to go explore it and to make an adventure of it.

Our Inner Self, our Soul, if you will, communicates with our conscious mind often through these urges. There are many kinds of urges that all need to be acknowledged. There are urges to grow and learn, to satisfy deep curiosities, to create and express ourselves, and to expand our awareness and skills.

We have urges to connect and reconnect all the various parts of ourselves on all the various levels of our existence. We seek to know who and what we are. And we hunger for connecting to that part of ourselves that seems to be our essential core.

But all too often we overlook and ignore these inner promptings. The urges and impulses get sidelined in favor of more immediate needs and the search for solutions to the challenges of daily life.

In my experience, these urges are there to help guide us through our trials. All the answers we need are there for us, but they don't always show themselves until we follow the prompts and impulses that are placed before us. They are often not obviously to our benefit, and they often defy our sense of logic. But we dismiss them to our peril.

We don't have to explain our urges to anyone. We don't have to find a reason or logical explanation for them. We don't even have to like them. But we do need to acknowledge them and treat them with respect. They have a validity of their own that is outside of the patterns and habits we generally live within.

Urges usually respond well to questions, just as dreams do. "What are you about?" is a good one. But the key piece is to trust that they are helping us.

Now we may not be recognizing that the urge that we have identified is only a part of the overall prompting. For instance, we may

have a strong urge to have sex with a particular person. That urge may, in fact, be much larger and when seen a step back, be about connecting to the elements of ourselves that this other person symbolizes. Or an urge to eat a large piece of moist chocolate cake may be more about giving ourselves the love that we have been withholding for too long.

But whatever the urge is, it is there to show us something about ourselves that is to our advantage to see. When we learn to trust our urges, even if we decide to not follow them, we connect to our inner guidance. And that connection, when cultivated, is how we create the life we desire.