

The Power of Acknowledgment

Speak with Power Speak with Passion book cover When others serve us in small or great ways, the act of genuinely acknowledging and expressing our appreciation brings completion and closure.

There are levels of acknowledging, from the courteous "Thank you" to returning phone calls and emails, which signal respect and grease the wheels of social interactions. Have you ever continued to do nice things for people who repeatedly didn't acknowledge you?

There's also a deeper level of acknowledgement, the full-blown one in which you totally re-create the person you're acknowledging, such that they experience being wholly "gotten" and blown away. When you fully acknowledge someone's magnificence, you blow away their ego and leave them fully empowered.

Senator Obama demonstrated this in his acknowledgment of Senator Clinton, after he had accumulated enough delegates to be the Democratic candidate (I'm not addressing politics here, but the power of acknowledgment). In his victory speech, although she wasn't present, he praised her for what seemed like several minutes, acknowledging her unwavering commitment over the years to public service, her experience, strength and hard work, her well-run campaign and her making him a better candidate. He went on and on, leaving no stone unturned and, in my listening, it didn't sound like lip service or flattery. He sounded, in my listening, like he was choosing to see her in the best possible light and was re-creating who she is, at her core, and where she lives her life from, at the core. I felt inspired and thought this acknowledgment would speed the healing process within the Democratic Party - again, my focus is on the power of acknowledgement.

To be able to acknowledge like this, we must address the spirit of the person, their highest intentions by looking, listening and feeling deeply into them as if into a mirror or space of infinite depth. Imagine that your words are bringing forth their physical form, living presence and personality. Choose to focus only on their purest intentions and expression. This is a very powerful and generative act and it gets easier with practice.

Acknowledgment is powerful, from the courteous "Thank you," the return of phone calls and emails, and sharing fully in the give and take of spirited conversation - to the re-creation of another's magnificence. Use the power of acknowledgement to bring about completion, so that new cycles of action and communication can begin with clean slates.