

“A Wish Your Heart Makes”

by Rev. “Twinkle” Marie Manning

In the words of Cinderella’s
Disney Fairy-Godmother:

Salagadoola menchicka boola
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo
Put 'em together and what have you got?
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo
Salagadoola menchicka boola
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo
It'll do magic, believe it or not
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo

Now salagadoola means menchicka boolaroo
But the thingamabob that does the job is
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo

Salagadoola menchicka boola
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo
Put 'em together and what have you got
Bibbidi-bobbidi
Bibbidi-bobbidi
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo

Just a wave of my stick
And to finish the trick
Bibbidi - bobbidi - boo

AKA “The Magic Song” (1948)
by Al Hoffman, Mack David and Jerry Livingston

Oh, the world of imagination and magical things. If only it were so simple
as a fun song accompanied by a magic wand to make our fondest dreams
come true.

Our dreams for the world.
Of safety and of peace.
Of harmony and wellbeing.
Our dreams for the *world made whole*.

Our *dreams for ourselves*.
The kinds of lives and locales we wish to live.
The things we would like to fill our days doing.

Yes, there are many kinds of wishes our hearts make.

Let's pause for just a moment.
Think about what your Biggest wish for the world is.
Not what you wish Did Not exist.
But what you wish DID EXIST.

Think about that.
And consider to yourself.
What would the world and the world around you be like?
Feel that!!

Now, think about what your Biggest wish for Yourself is.
What is that?
What does your life look like if that wish came true?
Just think about that for a moment.

How does it feel?
That wish come true...
In your heart - how does it feel?

Hold that feeling.

Yes, there are many kinds of wishes our hearts make.
And almost as many that we set aside, rather than take steps to bring them
into reality.

Perhaps we begin to follow a dream or a wish, yet when come upon an obstacle - or an equally mentally roadblocking Naysayer - we cease the direction of our most fondest dream.

Perhaps you are saying to yourself:

The world is in chaos, the future is dark, how can I possibly justify doing something so frivolous as wishing, or selfish as seeking to bring my personal wishes into reality.

Renowned Sikh activist, filmmaker, and civil rights lawyer, **Valarie Kaur**, would respond by first affirming and then pointing out: “The future is dark. *What if this is not the darkness of the tomb – but the darkness of the womb? What if this is our greatest transition?*”

As an activist working with communities recovering from xenophobic attacks, commencing with the murders of Sikhs after 9/11,

As well as being informed by her own personal experiences as a brown girl growing up in California farmland - and her own personal experiences with sexual assault and police violence, Valerie’s heart ignited and then ignited millions around the globe toward a revolutionary love motivated by her experiences and inspired by the wisdom of sages, scientists, and activists.

She says this revolutionary love is the call of our times, a radical, joyful practice that extends in three directions:

- to others,
- to our opponents,
- and
- to ourselves.

It enjoins us to see no stranger but instead look at others and say: *‘You are a part of me I do not yet know.’*

Her book, entitled *See No Stranger*, is a practical guide to changing the world, a synthesis of wisdom, a chronicle of personal and communal history —all joined together by a story of awakening.

Revolutionary love is medicine for our times. She suggests that it just might be our best chance for our collective future.

Which brings me to a key talking point for today's message:
Moral Imagination.

Moral imagination, according to philosopher **Mark Johnson**, means envisioning the full range of possibilities in a particular situation in order to solve an ethical challenge. Johnson emphasizes that acting morally often requires more than just strength of character.

For example, moral action requires empathy and the awareness to discern what is morally relevant in a given situation.

Moral imagination, as defined by **Minette Drumwright** (who devoted much of her work towards ethics in leadership) and philosopher **Patrick Murphy**, (who collaborated together) - they say moral imagination is the ability to be simultaneously ethical and successful by envisioning new and creative alternatives...moral imagination, combined with creativity and moral courage, enables both individuals and businesses to act more ethically in society.

Scottish economist and philosopher **Adam Smith** in his 1759 manuscript entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he proposes that,
“as individuals across society engage their imaginations, an imaginative point of view emerges that is uniform, general, and normative.”

From sentiments to imagination; from philosophizing to action:
The first known to have used the phrase, “moral imagination” was **Edmund Burke**, an Anglo-Irish statesman and writer. In his 1790 book, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, he claimed that moral concepts have particular manifestations in history, tradition and circumstance.

Moreover, from his studies, he concluded that *“the moral imagination has a central role in generating and recollecting the social and moral ideas that, when crystallized into custom and tradition”* inform our understandings of the world we live in.

Again, moral imagination involves not only the ability to generate useful ideas, but also the abilities to form ideas about what is good and right, and to put the best ideas into action for the service of others.

Which involves discernment about the circumstances in which people are in. Which involves sensitivity to cultural understandings as well.

Further down through the centuries many others have pointed to theories and impacts and, even, necessities of moral imagination.

- 20th Century American literary critic, **Irving Babbitt**;

- American social critic **Russell Kirk**;

And

- Professor of Business Ethics, **Patricia Werhane**.

To list just a few among many. Each, with the lens of their own industry and area of expertise. From literature to social science to raising families to educating children to the corporate landscape and environmental sacred economics.

Each suggest the merit of embodying *not just metaphorical concepts*, but substantial modes of practice and response with principles aligned with moral imagination.

These can be applied on large and personal scales.

What would our world look like if the leaders, if those in charge of the higher functioning of the societies humans build, who are in charge of national and international communications and conflict resolution were to create practices and responses informed largely by moral imagination?

How much freer would all our lives be?

How much more sustainable and joyous?

How much more *time* would we have to dedicate to that which we truly love and are inspired by, rather than wading in the water of tumult, destruction and despair?

Bringing it back to the deeply personal. To the wishes our hearts make. Stemming from the essence of who we are as human.

I want you to think back to those wishes you have...

The Big Wish for the world,

and

The Big Wish for yourself.

Many, perhaps not all of you, but many of you may have glimpsed in your mind's eye a creative endeavor...

- Resuming an art that once held your heart.
 - Playing an instrument;
 - Painting,
- Landscaping,
 - Perhaps studying a new language.
 - Cultivating a new meditation practice.

Perhaps honing in on skills you know you have, yet have not dedicated time to in a long while.

Perhaps *learning something new*, something that seems outside your typical and set box of habitual daily doings.

Aimee McKee, an author known for speaking, teaching and coaching artists all over the world and helping them to achieve their creative dreams suggests, hmmm...perhaps demands....or at least ardently proposes that now more than ever is when all of us - and she means All Of Us Need to make art!

In a recent talk in Manchester, England, she had this to say,
*“The world is literally and figuratively on fire
and I am going to tell you
that you need to make art.
And more than that,
I am going to argue that
the creative act
is a huge part in how we extinguish and put out these fires.”*

Now, she knows that statements like these have people instantly thinking
“ah, how cute is she to think that could save the world, or even ourselves.”
And that such a suggestion is often met with outright skepticism and rebuff.

Just as we've been conditioned regarding the valuelessness of wishes.
We have been conditioned to believe that dedicating energy and time to creative endeavors is not productive and indeed, a waste of time and resources.

Even among those who vote with their voice and their checkbooks for other people's creative expression - in our schools, our libraries, our museums and galleries - yes, even those who value creativity in others - they often dismiss or simply cannot acknowledge the benefits to embarking on their own creative ventures.

Aimee points out that we are living in a culture that sidelines the creative act.

That it is something for children, and for the retired, that it is an indulgence and frivolous.

When she talks about creativity - she means *all of it*:

From the things we tend to place on pedestals, and even award, like singing and painting and publishing and filmmaking -

She means all endeavors including:

- cooking and gardening
- knitting and sketching
- to Creating YouTube videos sharing your hobby. And yes, Singing.

Singing in our *everyday lives* - not just from the stage.

To painting and writing for our own self expression - not just to earn an income.

Everything that is creative.

We consume art to feel closer to humanity.

Yet, it is innately human to create art.

To sideline our art, our creative expression is a detriment to us and to all of those who could be touched by it.

The act of making art is not selfish.

It is inherently generous.

As is sharing it.

Aimee says that,

*"Your art is the antidote
for so many people's pain
yet you keep it to yourself."*

With exception of the few who share their art,
the rest of humanity seems to fall into two categories regarding their art.

- The first being - they do not create art.
- The second being, they create art but effectively hoard it.
By not sharing it with others.

We are blessed in this congregation having dedicated the first Sunday of each month to creative expression during our Coffee House services.

What a delight it is to have novice and expert musicians and writers and speakers share their creativity each month!

Likewise with the weekly Arts & Crafts gathering held in the *Church of the Downstairs*.

Many here recognize in theory and in practice the value of creative expression. And, of sharing our creativity with others.

Amiee brings this point forward when she talks about the poetry her father wrote and then gave it to her, exposing his vulnerability. A cherished gift. Along with leaving a *legacy of creativity* for her to embody. A legacy of creating and a legacy of sharing the creations.

Leave a legacy of something beautiful!

Leave a legacy of something beautiful!

- Paintings.
- Photographs.
- Poetry.
- Music.
- Favorite recipes you write down and give to your children and grandchildren and friends.
- Planting beautiful flowers everywhere.

You are inherently creative.

Your art is needed.

“Your art is the antidote” for so much pain.

“Your art is the antidote” to bring so much joy.

To you by bringing it to life.

To all you share it with.

And, if that Big Wish you have for yourself, isn't specifically artistic, know that there is creativity involved in bringing any dream into this physical realm.

Look into your heart.

Feel what it will be like to have your wish come true.

And, to the extent possible, make that your reality.

May it be so.

Bibbidi - bobbidi - boo!