



The MorningStar  November 2022

Journal

Volume 32 / No. 10

A FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER
BY CHRIS REED

A WORD FROM RICK JOYNER
BY RICK JOYNER

THE WAR ON CHILDREN
BY LANCE WALLNAU

ACTIONABLE FAITH—A GIFT FOR YOU
BY ANDREA JAEGER

THE FIRE OF GOD - PART 1
BY LILO KELLER



Actionable Faith—A Gift

BY ANDREA JAEGER

Throughout my life I have been told I have a gift of faith. Growing up, my family did not go to church. When I asked why, I was told, “We work late and don’t get home until 4:00 am, especially on weekends.” My parents owned a restaurant and lounge in Chicago. Cleanup each night was complicated. I understood their reasoning but still walked away wondering, “Hmm.”

There was no Bible in our house either. No cusped hands before dinner saying thanks to God or inviting Jesus into our hearts. Yet in many ways my parents seemed better off to me than most families I knew that went to church. My parents worked hard, were respectful, had high morals and values, and were happy with their marriage and place in the world. Our family cared about people, animals, bettering our world, and living life from the heart.

While my parents worked, my sister and I played at home. We were responsible kids; our parents rarely called a babysitter. I remember when I was four years old, one sitter said to my parents, “You have old souls in your children, no need for me.” At the time, I did not know that meant “mature.” I figured “old souls” were like “old fuddy duds” who skipped cherished birthday cake celebrations. So, I never dared tell others what that sitter said in my attempt to guarantee a lifetime of birthday cake celebrations!

Once at playtime, while our parents were hard at work in the “Windy City,” my ten-year-old and three-year-old sister and I decided to play hide and seek. I chose to hide in my parents’ closet. Thinking I needed a cover and hearing my sister nearing her end count, I

quickly opened dresser drawers searching for a blanket. I found that and much more, something very unexpected.

At the bottom of the drawer, hidden extremely well was a baby picture. The newborn’s face was badly bruised, disfigured and swollen, possibly permanently.

My seven-year-old self was curious why my parents had a picture of a badly injured baby hidden underneath seldom used items in their drawer. My sister ran into the room full game throttle. She looked surprised at her ease in finding me. I stared at her and said, “Did you know Mom and Dad had another baby?”

Laughing, my sister immediately grabbed the picture placing it back where it came from. Further confused I stood in silence, my go-to action whenever I want to hear what the air is saying about a situation. My sister said, “That is you. That is your baby picture.” I gave a slight, no-big-deal laugh and said, “Are you serious?”

My sister’s beauty was apparent since birth. Strangers often told my parents she should be a model. My sister did become a favorite child model with her uncanny ability to be amazingly quiet and still in every photo-shoot. Since I had been born with zero jealousy DNA, I was so proud of her. I carried thick Sears catalogs to

school for show-and-tell to show off my sister modeling for Sears. Those free catalogs were abundantly fun. My sister and I would sit for hours enjoying each page though we had no money to buy the clothes or items featured on my sister's modeling pages, much less any other page.

During that playtime, I told my sister, "I am fine with how I looked. It's cool, but why is my picture hidden in a drawer?" I had no anger or disappointment, just my normal, insatiable curiosity.

My sister was an "older soul" for sure,—or at least this was the interesting commentary I received from others throughout her life. She was valedictorian, Homecoming Queen, and a star tennis player, yet none of these out featured her even better inner self. I beamed when my sister's Stanford University professors told me when I visited, "Your sister is wiser than us." They were as serious as I was joyful. Having grown up with my sister, I knew they spoke the truth.

Since that hide-and-seek adventure, I never further inquired about that picture. I was satisfied with my sister's answer. She said, "You looked like you did in that picture for a long time. I don't know why it's in the drawer. My baby pictures are not out either."

My takeaway from that moment was: inner self is priority; outer self is never a person's only existence. It was an easy concept then and still is, perhaps because I have a memory of my birth in the hospital. I felt massive pressure on my head. Later in life, I learned that doctors had to use forceps and suction on me, perhaps explaining the enormous pressure I had felt on my head.

I also clearly remember that it was not only me coming into this world, but I was also aware of and felt God's presence with me during my birth, even to the point of remembering a conversation we had in a heavenly place and then went somewhere else with some people. Recognizing and enjoying that interaction, I believed our connection was with the entire universe and continuous. For whatever reason, this memory has remained with me and confidential until now.

This normal-to-me friendship has continued. Nursery school and childhood memories of our conversations

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abound. A throughout-life communication, presence, and friendship, divinely orchestrated, yet one rarely explained, even in movies.

Filmmakers love entertaining audiences with scary, sinister, and menacing forces, but they are missing out on the celestial and extraordinary of actionable faith. The “now” is always an opportunity to remember, know, and have actionable faith. We have choices. Influences of the Divine continuously seek our attention. We should seek the same.

Actionable faith is not free of challenges. God and the universe's callings of mystical and cosmic nature, including visits, messages, signs, wonders, dreams, visions, guidance, and direction come with responsibility. One special quote I live by is, "Suffering is not the worst thing that can happen to us; the worst that can happen to us is disobedience to God." Listening, knowing, and being centered on our calling and purposes are paramount and come by practicing actionable faith.

Being aware of my heavenly gifts early in life has allowed for my continued development of connection with greater ease. However, everyone can receive the gift of actionable faith, opening an entire new world of opportunity.

The initiations, communications, and comradery with God and the universe that I have experienced and know personally are normal to me. One day soon I will write and share about this in full. Over twenty years ago, I shared just a glimpse and a well-known book publisher said, after reading it, "The world isn't ready for this. Can you write about your professional tennis career instead?"

The past thirty-seven years of running a children's cancer foundation has been a passion and calling of mine. Helping children in hospitals, schools, orphanages, and shelters is not easy, even with God, saints, angels, and the universe's communications and visits. Callings have the essence of challenges no matter how fulfilling or cosmically connected.

That is why I wanted to write this article: even with what I have as actionable faith birthed into my breath, essence, and presence; listening, knowing, respect, gratitude, and fulfillment are essential.

Actionable faith comes with effort. It is a gift that requires the first step of "receiving." Receiving requires listening. Knowing a gift of actionable faith has been presented to you allows for respect and gratitude. Far from over at that point, there is a well-known Scripture: **"To whom much is given, of him will much be required"** (see **Luke 12:48**). Also known as "w-o-r-k," actionable faith is empowering. Actionable faith allows for divine light, truth, and service to come to life. Light of consciousness within shines as faith actionable.

There are countless eras of my life where actionable faith confronted suffering, including brutal, life-shattering suffering that came knocking. My professional tennis career, ranked #2 in the world at age sixteen, had tremendously difficult situations, each of which I was able to survive and rise above.

My humanitarian efforts since leading Little Star Foundation have never been for the weak of heart. Nevertheless, award-winning programs persevere, including "Field of Dreams meets Little Star" with Kevin Costner, improving the lives of children with cancer and children in need worldwide, which you can be part of if you feel called.

I am in a permanent state of gratitude and awe on how actionable faith calls a village together to help, to live life to the fullest, and to anoint each person's progression when one is centered with God, the Divine, and the universe, embodying actionable faith.

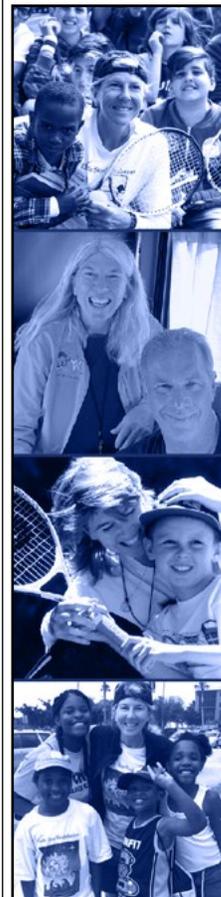
To listen, to receive, to know, to serve, to give, to be our highest and best self is a birthright. A life lived to the full embraces actionable faith.

"So, we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is

wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:16, 18).

Be mindful and grateful how actionable faith is a gift, resulting in knowingness, peace of heart and soul, with eternal results—glorious indeed! 🙏

ANDREA JAEGER became the #2-ranked professional tennis player in the world at the age of sixteen. While on the pro tennis circuit, Andrea helped ease the pain and suffering of children in hospitals, schools, and street corners. Using all her pro tennis career earnings, Andrea began her own children's cancer foundation. For the past thirty-seven years, Little Star Foundation (littlestar.org) has provided long-term care and better quality of life for children with cancer and children in need around the world. Andrea has been connected to MorningStar for decades and has authored *First Service-Following God's Calling* and *Finding Life's Purpose*.



Little Star Foundation

Little Star Foundation provides long term care and better quality of life to children with cancer and children in hospitals, schools, orphanages and shelters throughout the U.S. and the world.

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