

THE POWER OF A GRANDER VIEW

Presented at Wide Horizon's Annual Meeting, October 14, 2012

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To introduce the idea that a grander view is empowering, I will share an experience I had during the summer after I graduated from high school. I was here in Colorado on a rigorous climb on Mt. Yale while attending the Adventure Unlimited camps. During our descent, a few of us had gotten quite a bit ahead of the group, and while crossing a boulder field some large rocks became dislodged. Consequently a fellow hiker found herself in the path of a pretty big rockslide, and after taking quite a few tumbles, she came to a rest. I was the first one to get to her. She appeared to be unconscious. As I knelt down beside her, I felt completely helpless. I wasn't well versed in first aid, but worse, I felt totally unprepared as a Christian Scientist to apply anything that I had learned during my 16 years as a Sunday school student. I felt personally responsible, incompetent and afraid.

To this point in my life I had experienced wonderful healings, but they were pretty much the result of someone else's prayers. I thought, "Well, let me try repeating the *Scientific Statement of Being* from the Christian Science Textbook". So I started out, "*There is no life, truth nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation for God is all*" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 468). But then, I got stuck. I simply couldn't recall the next line, or the next. So after a brief pause, I started in again but couldn't get any further this time. Then I was feeling even more afraid and much less competent. However, an amazing thing happened next that would have a huge impact on the rest of my life.

Still sitting there by myself, alone with the fallen hiker, I knew I had to get a grip. I needed to calm down. I needed help. I needed God. So I took a moment to just sit still. To this day I recall sitting there alone, quietly gazing out over the amazing panorama before me—the alpine meadow below, the snow-capped peaks on the horizon and the lush forest further down below timberline. And then, without a conscious effort, my thought began to shift. I found myself becoming acutely aware of each component of this living complex system of nature before me. It was a rich sensory experience. I felt the gentle sound of the wind in the pines; the sound of the waterfall and creeks carrying melting snow from the higher elevations to nourish the delicate alpine meadows. In this grand view before me I began to understand how all of nature works together in a way that is harmonious, balanced as if it's perfectly choreographed by a higher power. In that moment I realized that I was getting my first real glimpse of the perfect nature of God's creation. This expansive view was so harmonious, so grand it was as if God was saying to me, "This is how my creation works. Everything exists in perfect harmony in accord with everything else. There are no accidents in my kingdom!" And right then a deep-felt calm came over me. My prayer was being answered by gaining a grander view of the God's creation. I felt calm—completely at peace. Looking back I believe I was experiencing the most sublime sensation of being alone with God.

It takes so much longer to describe this single moment than the actual amount of time it occurred, but when I again looked down at the crumpled hiker before me, I was so clear that it was merely illusion—completely contrary with the nature of God’s creation that was just revealed to me.

So this is what I did. I began repeating the *Scientific Statement of Being* again. And guess what happened? No, I couldn’t get through it this time either. I got stuck at the same place. But this time, the young woman woke up and finished it with me. Amazed, I sat there praying with her until others showed up. With assistance she was able to make it the rest of the way down to the bus that would take us back to camp. That evening she was back in full swing, and there were no signs of cuts and bruises that seemed so vivid when I first arrived on the scene.

So why did this experience have such profound impact on me? Because it was the milestone experience that marked the point when Christian Science became so much more than merely a belief system to me. It became the lens through which I would come to view my life and everything in it.

This experience with a few others will help to illustrate the four points of this talk today. They are:

1. All healing is the result of a grander view.
2. Striving for a grander view will help you with any challenge you encounter.
3. Mrs. Eddy gives specific instruction for obtaining a grander view in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.
4. What is the grandest view possible?

Point one: All healing is the result of a grander view

To test out the notion that all healing is the result of a grander view, let’s begin by looking at the healing practice of the master Christian. I think it’s accurate to say that in each opportunity Christ Jesus brought a grander view to the situation at hand. Sometimes it was the patient that required a grander view. Sometimes it was others at the scene, and sometimes it was even his disciples.

Consider the impotent man at the pool called Bethesda (John 5). Here was definitely a case where the patient needed a grander view. In some ways the man’s perception of the situation parallels the way a lot of people view current healthcare challenges. In today’s parlance we might say he had a pre-existing condition (38 years). He had limited access to the healthcare at hand (no one to carry him into the pool), and because there were so many people in need of the limited resources the supply was being rationed.

So what was the grander view that Jesus brought to this scene—and in fact to every healing he performed? How about this: “*Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick*” (S&H, p. 476).

In the context of our discussion today, one might say: *Jesus beheld in Science a grander view of man, who appeared to him where a limited and narrow view of man appeared to mortals. In this grander view the Savior saw God's own likeness, and this grander view of man healed the sick.*

In a case where the disciples were the ones that needed a grander view, consider the situation where they brought a man to Jesus who was born blind. In the disciples' view the blindness was caused by either his sins or his parents' sins. Now compare their limited, narrow view with the more expansive view of Christ Jesus. He dismissed the notion that the blindness had an actual cause and instructed his disciples to adopt a grander view. He introduced the principle that what appeared as blindness to unenlightened human sense was in fact an opportunity to see the works of God be made manifested—a metaphysical principle which would be articulated more clearly with the discovery of Christian Science.

So in view of the idea that all healing is the result of a grander view; you might enjoy reviewing your own healings and see how developing a grander view may have helped bring about the demonstration. Or perhaps the grander view was the result of the demonstration.

Point two: Striving for a grander view will help you with any challenge you encounter

With his permission, I'd like to share with you the experience of my friend John. After a successful career in the military, John leveraged his experience to create a very successful company serving the airline industry. Now, I've known John most of my life and I've always enjoyed his spirited personality and keen business savvy. Earlier in our careers we'd often get together for business lunches where we would entertain each other with puffed up tales of our business successes and challenges. John was the classic entrepreneurial leader—an extreme example of what is commonly referred to as a “Type A” personality. His company was his life, and his life was his work, and somewhere in the narrow cracks of time he would make an effort to carve out a little space for his family and his church.

In business, John seemed to have the Midas touch and he lived pretty well as a result. Sales remained strong through the early stages of the recent economic downturn. But the nature of the business required fluid lines of credit as a cushion to cover extended periods of delayed receivables and also to keep an ample supply of inventory. Being highly leveraged wasn't too much of a problem until the cash flow slowed down and the lending environment eroded practically overnight. And then a major airline—one of his biggest clients—went into bankruptcy and wiped out a substantial amount of cash receivables.

The banks put the squeeze on lines of credit. Relationships deteriorated to the point of becoming hostile. Feeling backed into a corner, John called me for help and for several months we chatted weekly about gaining a spiritual perspective of the situation. The banks were calling in the debt. His suppliers were demanding payment. Back rent was accumulating, and his name was being vilified in the press. His lawyers assured him that

things were going to get worse before they got better. As a business executive he had pretty thick skin, but now it was time to develop his spiritual armor.

John instinctively knew that it was time for a significant mental shift; or in the context of today's theme, it was time for a much grander view of himself and his relationship with God. In our discussions we talked a lot about King David's spiritual learning path as he struggled with power and ego, and even ended up in a type of moral bankruptcy. We enjoyed learning from David's Psalms how he humbly and tearfully recovered his tender relationship with God. And how he prayed to God to create in him a clean heart and renew a right spirit in him. David was a great resource for my discussions with John.

Did things get better? Actually, no. In fact it turned into a sort of slugfest between the bankers and lawyers. The company went into receivership and all assets were seized—an alarming situation given that John had personally guaranteed several million dollars to secure the loans.

Although the ordeal was getting worse, something else was actually getting better. John was beginning to develop a whole new view of himself and his situation. In Biblical terms he was putting off the old man for the new (II Cor. 5). In his words, "I began to learn to hold my thought above the material fray. This prevented little things from turning into big things. And I began to see the big things as opportunities to overcome evil with good in my thinking." He writes, "I transitioned into a listener versus a reactor! In making this adjustment, I found that certain people that had been difficult to work with actually became a pleasure for me to deal with. We all became focused on the right activity versus personal sense, ego and hurt feelings."

In the end the existing business was closed; yet everyone landed on their feet. Every employee found a job with nearby companies. The landlord collected all past due rent and was able to sell the properties in a down market for a higher than market price. All assets and inventory were liquidated, and loans were paid off or settled without destroying personal livelihoods, including John's. As the old business wound down, John's new venture has been ramping up quickly with his existing customer base. Long-term business partners who witnessed the difficult challenges stepped forward to help, resulting in positive revenue opportunities for John and his partners. John adds, "And I have had hundreds of mini demonstrations. I have suffered some physical problems related to the weight and supposed pressure of this event, but once I let go, and stopped outlining and began listening, the pain disappeared."

John ended up moving his office into his home and has become much more engaged with his family. He spends a generous portion of his time helping his wife with her business start up. These days he works with a renewed spirit and a generous heart.

I hope that what you see in these experiences is the power of a grander view lifting us out of the narrow, limited mortal view, and lifting us up from what can so easily become a downward spiral.

Point three: The key steps to achieve a grander view are presented in *Science and Health*

So what kind of guidance does Mrs. Eddy give us with respect to achieving a grander view? Well, actually she gets very specific. She provides a detailed description starting on page 248 in *Science and Health*.

We are all sculptors, working at various forms, moulding and chiseling thought. What is the model before mortal mind? Is it imperfection, joy, sorrow, sin, suffering? Have you accepted the mortal model? Are you reproducing it? Then you are haunted in your work by vicious sculptors and hideous forms. Do you not hear from all mankind of the imperfect model? The world is holding it before your gaze continually. The result is that you are liable to follow those lower patterns, limit your life work, and adopt into your experience the angular outline and deformity of matter models.

Now here are the specific steps she says we need to follow. In her words:

To remedy this we must first turn our gaze in the right direction and then walk that way.

Can you think of any better Biblical model for this than that of the Prodigal Son? After finally hitting bottom in his downward spiral he finally “came to himself” (Luke 15). You might say his limited, narrow view finally came crashing down on him and he had no choice but to turn his gaze in the right direction. And indeed he literally walked that way, back to the Father where he experienced the grandest view possible!

What’s the next step? Mrs. Eddy continues: *We must form perfect models in thought and look at them continually, or we shall never carve them out in grand and noble lives.*

Let’s keep in mind that the perfect model is not a human construct such as a great car or perfect job, but rather God’s model for man and the universe and all the activities that are embraced in it.

Step three: *Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love — the kingdom of heaven — reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear.*

Can you see this step in relationship to my friend John’s experience? He had to replace his need for control, his brash approach to working with others and his obsessive focus on the business with unselfishness, goodness, mercy, etc.

Let me pause here before we move on to step four to share another personal experience that underscores this point. I spent most of my business career helping lead a small California high-tech company through the go-go days of the 80’s and 90’s to become a major global enterprise. The management culture was often combative.

After about four years in that environment I began to experience symptoms that were similar to some of my colleagues who were having heart problems. In many cases they ended up having various types of heart surgeries. Of course I turned to the form of treatment that my family had practiced for the previous two generations. I was confident that I would be healed. But I wasn't. And then I got fearful—really fearful. I was pretty good at masking my fears, but it seemed like I was constantly in dialogue with a mental voice that kept taunting me with arguments like, “Just go in and get it fixed like everyone else”, or “what if it's not fixable, what if it's something incurable?” And the worst one was, “what if this is it for you, what if you've hit the wall in your reliance on spiritual healing and you're going to be one of those who pass on way too early?”

For a while I worked with various Christian Science practitioners and found some occasional relief, but not complete healing. Occasionally some very dramatic symptoms would catch me off guard and really throw me into the pit of fear and anxiety.

Finally this is what I did. I decided to subject myself to the most rigorous form of surgery available. Mrs. Eddy describes it as “*the dissection of thoughts to know their quality, quantity and origin.*” She says, “*This branch of study is indispensable to the excision of error*” (S&H, p. 462).

So, working with Mrs. Eddy's definition of “heart”—“*mortal feelings, motives affections, joys, and sorrows*”—from the “Glossary” in *Science and Health*, I realized it was time to dissect my mental heart so to speak (p. 587). I had to clear out layers of toxic thinking such as cynicism, resentment, and a propensity get engage with colleagues in harsh and destructive criticism of others. I especially needed to let “*...Thy Word enrich [my] affections [for] all mankind...*” (“Daily Prayer,” *The Church Manual*, p. 41).

The healing didn't come at once. But it did come after a wonderfully refreshing phase of deep spiritual discovery through intense study and prayer. Unlike my mountain climbing experience, where it was a grander view of the external environment that fed me with so much inspiration, in this case it was gaining a grander view of my internal, mental environment, which needed to shift. And it did. The symptoms disappeared. I remained with the company for ten more years, and during that period I had many opportunities to lead several management initiatives that contributed to our earning a place on the list of Forbes 100 Best Managed Companies. You might say the operation was a success.

So going back to step three, I must say, that in my discussions with patients, so often it's clear that this idea of *letting unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love — the kingdom of heaven — reign within us*, is really important to laying the mental groundwork for healing. If, as Mrs. Eddy says, “*Disease is an image of thought externalized,*” then consider the importance of replacing negative, toxic thoughts with goodness, mercy, justice health and holiness (S&H, p. 411). In the same paragraph she goes on to say, “*Whatever is cherished forth in mortal mind as the physical condition is imaged forth on the body*” (S&H, p. 411). So use this step to gain a grander view of your internal, mental environment—one that embraces these positive, health-giving qualities, and watch how they get imaged forth on the body.

Ok, now let's move on to step four: *Let us accept Science, relinquish all theories based on sense-testimony, give up imperfect models and illusive ideals; and so let us have one God, one Mind, and that one perfect, producing His own models of excellence* (p. 249).

To some extent I think that's part of what happened to me on the mountain climb. God was showing me His own *model of excellence* and nudging me to give up imperfect models or my narrow view of the situation. I think this experience illustrates an important point. This idea of reaching out for a grander view is not an intellectual experience. You can't humanly reason your way to this grander view. That's not what helped me on the slope of Mt. Yale. It was on-your-knees humility. It's the moment when you finally learn to "*Be still and know that I am God*" (Psalms 46:10).

Step five: *Let us feel the divine energy of Spirit, bringing us into newness of life and recognizing no mortal nor material power as able to destroy* (p. 249).

There are some really important points here. The marginal heading next to this line is "Renewed Selfhood." I find in my practice that the idea of feeling the divine energy of Spirit and letting it bring us into newness of life is a critical principle in warding off the signs of aging. It helps us turn away from the vicious sculptors and their hideous forms that are trying to haunt us and narrow our views as we move through various stages of life. Let's agree that as we move into what is commonly referred to as the advanced years, we should use our experiences to widen our views, and not allow them to become more narrow, more fixed, or worse, more focused on the rear view mirror, rather than on the grander view presented as we look forward to the road ahead.

Finally step six: *Let us rejoice that we are subject to the divine "powers that be"* (p. 249).

Here, Mrs. Eddy has borrowed a phrase from Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Rome wherein he wrote: "*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God*" (Romans 13:1).

Can you think of a grander view for how to be governed—especially during election season? We need an extensively grander view of government in this context. As we cultivate this grander view, we will free ourselves from a narrow, limiting and perhaps even depressing view of government.

So fellow sculptors, to help you mold and chisel thought, let's recap the six steps to avoid recreating imperfect models and ensure we are pursuing a grander view. They are...

1. *Turn our gaze in the right direction and then walk that way.*
2. *Form perfect models in thought and look at them continually, or we shall never carve them out in grand and noble lives.*
3. *Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love — the kingdom of heaven — reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear.*

4. *Let us accept Science, relinquish all theories based on sense-testimony, give up imperfect models and illusive ideals; and so let us have one God, one Mind, and that one perfect, producing His own models of excellence.*
5. *Let us feel the divine energy of Spirit, bringing us into newness of life and recognizing no mortal nor material power as able to destroy.*
6. *Let us rejoice that we are subject to the divine "powers that be."*

Point four: What is the grandest view possible?

How about this: “*And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good*” (Gen 1:31). As I mentioned earlier, I’m convinced that what came to my aid on the mountain climb was that God was showing me that He made everything good.

Another personal experience helps to illustrate this point. Many years ago I found myself in a condition where I was completely immobilized and seized with a terrible pain. I could barely communicate with those around me, yet I was completely conscious of everyone in the room. I knew that a Christian Science practitioner had been called and that my loved ones were working diligently in support of a healing; but I was acutely aware that they were very concerned and fearful. I found myself distracted by their fears.

Although I was absolutely confident that I would pass through this extremely challenging situation and be healed, I was frustrated that others around me were stressing out. This experience taught me that during a difficult challenge, what our fellow Christian Scientists need most from us is to know or feel that we are seeing them as God sees them—whole, perfect and good. That we are seeing them in Science with such spiritual clarity that fear cannot enter into the healing atmosphere!

Let me emphasize this point again. To see as God sees, to see the universe and every one in it as He sees them—as Spirit created them—is one of the most powerful ways to bring healing into our experience, and especially to support the healing activity of those in our lives who are facing a challenge. That’s what I learned on that mountain climb so many years ago. I was alone and afraid, and God showed me how to see the goodness of His creation, and in that goodness there is no accident, no pain, no fear. All is harmony.

So in the end, isn’t this why the dear ones come to this beautiful facility for Christian Science nursing care? Isn’t it to experience for themselves Wide Horizon’s grander view? And isn’t this also a reason the wonderful, dedicated staff comes to work every day—to see everyone here as God sees them? Because that indeed is the grandest view any of us can ever have!

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