



## **Spiritual Principles that Grow Corn**

*By Joanna Brandt*

Following Guidance does not mean abandoning our goals. Guidance gives us the shortest path to achieving them. Learn from this classic joke:

*Golda, a poor haberdasher, needed a partner. God agreed to go into business with her. “What shall we call our new company?” How about “Golda and God?” the Creator suggested graciously. “Goodness, no,” replied a shocked Golda, “You get top billing.” So they decided on “Lord and Tailor.”\**

I’m not sure I was a good candidate for entrepreneurship. On the plus side, my dad was an entrepreneur who ran his business from our basement. I saw firsthand how to achieve a dream with a modest financial investment and small, steady steps toward a goal.

On the minus side, I did not come from a business or marketing career. I majored in theatrical costuming and worked as a costume shop manager for three years, before leaving to follow a spiritual path.

For the next ten years I was totally out of the mainstream, studying with a spiritual teacher, practicing yoga and meditation, and reading and exploring human potential, spiritual growth, energetic healing, and alternative medicine.

When I chose entrepreneurship, having no real business experience, my resource was a cache of spiritual wisdom. I was ready to find out if, in the words of Native American visionary healer Sun Bear, “my philosophy grew corn.”

In a meditation back in 1988, I asked the Universe, “What do you want me to do now?” The answer came as a “thunk.” It sounded as if someone had dropped a thick business plan on a mahogany desk. It felt as if the business plan had dropped into my brain.

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\* Lord & Taylor is an upscale department store chain based in New York City.

“Publish a magazine,” a Voice said. So I did.

What did I know about magazine publishing? Enough to fill a 350 page book with 345 blank pages. But during my first five months in Reading, Pennsylvania, I had become a magnet for news about local holistic activities. The publication, of course, would be about alternative health, human potential, and spiritual growth.

It went from idea to publication in one month. My friend, Rod, suggested the magazine’s name, *Lightworks*. Another friend, Ken, had recently started a brand new type of enterprise—desk-top publishing. I invited friends with consciousness-based businesses to contribute articles and distribute copies at their locations. I included their business card sized-ads for free, expecting that some would continue as paid advertisers. They did.

I approached the owner of the local bookstore. “I’m starting a magazine and I’d like you to invest \$300. I’ll pay you back with a year’s worth of advertising.” He looked at me skeptically... and wrote a check. I suspect he considered it a charitable donation. Not only did he get the advertising, he continued to advertise for the life of his store.

*Lightworks* grew like ripples spreading in a pond, from 600 copies in Reading to 15,000 copies distributed from Baltimore, Maryland to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Each month, *Lightworks* changed the lives of its readers: “Thank you for connecting me with others of like mind.” “I was touched by your editorial.” “I don’t feel alone anymore.” “Just when I needed this, your magazine appeared.”

## **Spiritual Principles That Grow Corn**

Flashy experiences are exciting, but they’re also misleading. More often than not, messages come in subtle ways. Here are some of the subtle ways Spirit leads us.

### ***Repetition***

Pay attention when you’re thinking the same creative thought again and again. For weeks, I have had the idea, “I’m going to write a book called,

*The Best Stress Reduction Techniques You Can Do in 15 Minutes or Less.”*  
Finally, I got it—this is my next assignment.

### ***Songs, Poetry, Repeated Phrases***

Have you ever found yourself humming a song for no reason? If you open your mind, you will discover an encoded message. Recently I woke to a song that affirmed the abundance of the Universe—my inner voice assuring me that I am on the right track.

### ***Angelic Messengers***

Has someone ever come into your life for a brief moment, said something that touched you deeply, and then disappeared? Or you attended a lecture or workshop and it seemed as if the presenter was speaking directly to you?

We receive guidance in the most unexpected places. A chance remark from a total stranger may provide just the inspiration or direction you require.

### ***Trust Your Gut***

We are blessed with a “second brain.” This gut-brain gives us instantaneous feedback. Only later do our higher faculties put logic to what we have already known.

To illustrate: It was one day away from press time when the buzz started. The local bookstore had a new owner. I called her immediately. Something in her voice caused my stomach to tighten, but dollar signs flashed before my eyes. Letting eagerness override gut feelings, we threw together an ad just in time to get it into that month’s issue.

When I saw the finished product, I understood why my gut was churning. We were both in such a hurry that the ad did not include the store’s phone number. She was furious and vowed never to advertise with *Lightworks* again.

That experience confirmed a lesson I had long been learning. When I feel a tightening in my gut, no matter how tempting the “opportunity,” I won’t take it.

Gut messages are part of our pre-verbal “fight or flight” monitoring system. We also have a “stay and play” trigger. Notice when you feel your heart opening, your chest feeling spacious. Use this feeling to guide you to say “yes” to opportunities.

### ***Go With the Flow***

There are many ways to say this: Nature knows best how to organize. You are responsible for the vision; Spirit is responsible for the means. Let go and let God.

As entrepreneurs, we write business plans, create sales strategies, hire marketing consultants and conduct market research. (Although I sheepishly admit that, having no business experience, I did none of these.) We do our best to predict events and control circumstances. Yet we are not in control.

An ancient proverb puts it this way: “The means gather around the pure of heart.” A larger reality moves us in the direction of our greatest good and our job is to cooperate. The “pure of heart” are not distracted by ego when Higher Power intervenes.

I often experience this guidance as a disruption, followed by a sudden urge to act.

“Joanna, I was just talking about you!” Dotsie exclaimed as she hurried toward me. Fifteen minutes earlier I was home typing this article. Words flew off my fingertips. Suddenly ideas came screeching to a halt. Despite trying (red flag!) to get back on track, my brain hissed like the static on an old radio. “This is getting me nowhere,” I thought and followed an impulse to return some library books. That’s where I ran into Dotsie. “A friend is leading a women’s retreat and she would like a yoga teacher. Send me an email and I’ll send you the details,” she said.

Letting go is a truly feminine approach to life. The masculine principle muscles itself and pushes on in the face of resistance. The feminine principle surrenders with grace.

When you’ve worked for months and don’t make the sale; when the avenues you are traveling seem all dead ends; when you are frustrated

beyond belief, take a deep breath and let go. Find the opportunity in the blockage. Take the path of least resistance. See what happens.

### *Daily Miracles*

My friend Nancy has a poster in her kitchen that says, “We don’t believe in miracles, we depend on them.” Why it’s in her kitchen, I don’t know. But I do know the message is real.

Miracles are those wonderful things that happen that we have no control over. Like Indian Jones, we make a leap of faith and the ground comes up to meet us. Running our business from faith adds a powerful dimension to our decisions.

The current of life flows toward our greatest fulfillment. We can best ride that current when we get out of our own way, move beyond our programming, dissolve our preconceived notions, and keep our rational minds in check. Making Spirit our first partner carries us to success and fulfillment beyond what we can conceive or achieve on our own.

When I started *Lightworks*, I had no vision of the great journey I would take, no idea how influential it would become. Each day was a miracle, filled with new ideas, new friends, new opportunities.

Eight and a half years later, my idol—healer, teacher and publisher, Louise Hay—praised *Lightworks* as “a bright star on the East Coast.” This bright star illuminated the hearts and minds of thousands of readers searching for meaning, hope and inspiration. Like a candle that lights other candles, the principles of alternative health, human potential, and spiritual growth spread from reader to reader, and the consciousness that accrued became the tipping point that brought these ideas into the mainstream.

The holistic principles that were once so “radical” have become part of the cultural milieu. Yoga, meditation, complementary medicine are reported in mainstream media, recommended by traditional doctors, and studied by the National Institutes of Health. In 1995, *Lightworks* ceased publication. My assignment was complete and I was ready for Spirit to lead me to new adventures.

