

Transcribed from a sitting with Emily Carson
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Make of your Life a Flame

Blaze the path that burns for you. Light it up with your intention, with your willingness, with your intensity. Don't just flicker here—burn. You are not a light about to go out. You could be here resolutely, absolutely. You could burn every step you take. You tread too gingerly on this planet. Scorch the earth where you walk. Be the fire that lives in you. You try not to offend, not to disrupt, not to upset, but for what? So that you will look behind you one day and see no footsteps? Leave a trace here; the earth can take it. And your fellow humans, they can take it, too. They may be bruised and scratched a bit by your vitality at work, but we all get knocked around a little bit. It is still worth it. Make of your life a flame. It will destroy things, but only those that are ready to go. Make of your language a torch. Let it light as well as burn. And make of your footfalls a purposeful path, a real and intended way. Change all the places you walk by changing the way you walk. Change the people you see by the way you look at them, with your tongue and your words. Change the planet; it will only evolve. And I'm not saying you should intend this transformation; you should intend only your own intensity. Whatever happens then is right. Blaze your path. You are not living enough yet; your vitality is still squelched. Destroy everything in your way. Bless the earth that you scorch. Thank it for the chance to be alive, and leave it knowing it was there for you and you made the most of it.

Questions and Answers

Q: So I need some help right now understanding my process. ...I know a lot of it is just being calm and connecting with guidance but, in terms of the emotional work, I've been...getting swept away by...hysteria which...seems like it comes up around my feeling rejected—specifically by I., but I see it everywhere.... I'm very afraid of my heart being broken around rejection, and then this thing that I have around failing, or not...keeping up.

The only real emotional work for you right now is loss. Everything else is hysteria. Many days you will not be able to face any loss, and on those days just to be in contact with your guidance, to love yourself and care for yourself the way it does, to let it be your sanity and your sobriety, this will be all you can do and it's a day well spent. But every time you can, if there is even a glimmer of an opportunity for it, feel your loss. Feel that everything is taken from you, everything ends. Many things can trigger that, many things do. Take just one opportunity all week to see if you can feel a bit of that loss. That one effort is enough. It's all you need right now. The rest must be sobriety, contemplation and simple faith. That is what you can do right now, and that is enough.

Q: ...I have a personal matter that I'd like to get some insight in. I own an engineering consulting business. It's one I started almost twenty years ago, built it up to about sixty employees, I had three partners. Last year, in March, my partners tried a takeover attempt of the company, and when it failed they left the company along with a number of other people. The manner in which they left was quite unsettling. Since that time, I've lost a number of senior staff which has put quite a load on me, personally, and everyone else who stayed in the company. It's quite puzzling to me because I feel as if I've done a lot to put out a lot of good to the company and the people within it.... So whatever there is in this that is a lesson I'm completely open to it and would be interested in hearing your take on it.

How do you feel about staying with your company?

I have mixed feelings about that. On the one hand, I feel I have a responsibility to finish the dream that I created, on the other hand, I'm burned out.

You have no responsibility. If the dream is still there, if it is still alive and intact somewhere in your enterprise as it exists right now, then it may be worth staying for. But if that is gone and it has been replaced by obligation and disappointment, then it may well be time to leave. It won't be a failure. It will be something that lived and then died, as will everything. The problem you

face right now is that there is so little spark left in you, so little feeding you or feeding this. The ambition and courage and a small dose of idealism that went into the creation of this project are almost all gone. They are spent. You must ask yourself, “Is this over?” and not, “Will I let this be over?” or, “Would I like this to be over?” It, on its own, has a state and a quality and a life span. And, if it is finished, you cannot revive it, and you’re better to let it be and let it be done. There are so many possible new chapters. Find something you feel excited about. And if you find that that means doing almost nothing at all, then do nothing; that’s a choice too. Find what your dream is now. That is all that matters.

Q: My son’s mother is in a new environment—a seemingly better environment. And I want to know if it’s good for him to be with her now and, in turn, good for me for him to be with her, or if it’s just going to cause more negative repercussions.

Where does she live?

Near Dekum...right up the street.

With who?

With herself and her boyfriend.

Does he want to see her?

Yeah, I mean, recently, a lot.

It is best that his wishes are honored, as much as possible. He wants his mother, and to whatever extent she can be had, he should have her. Many past dangers have subsided and so you needn’t worry about him in her company. It will be difficult, but the difficulties are not insurmountable and it is better that he have her love than that he be without it. What is best for you is that you do not lose your own sense that you are entitled to run your house. If he comes home with contrary opinions and experiences, he still has no say in how things are done in your house. If you give into him you will regret it, but if you hold firm at this point it will pay off in spades in the long run. It is the only thing you need to be careful of. Aside from that, this could prove very useful to you and to him.

Q: I have been having a lot of grief come up.... Last week, I was crying really hard by myself and I got scared, and I've been resistant since then and...I just would like to hear what you have to say about that....

What were you scared of?

I didn't think I'd ever stop crying.

What if you never stop crying?

I don't know how I would leave my house or be in the world, I guess. I hit some level where I get really scared....

You may never stop crying, and if you ever reach that point in your grief, it will be the happiest you've ever been and you will never wish for that grief to go away. To be absolutely, essentially and ecstatically happy, you really won't care whether you can leave your house or drive well or buy your groceries or function. If you are willing to let yourself fall over that edge, beyond crying, where crying never needs to stop and grief is just home and not some passing wave, everything will look so different the idea of functioning in the world will not even cross your mind. You get scared of a peculiar degree of depth; that's all it is, it is deeper than anything you're used to. Perhaps next time you'll remember just to lose yourself in it, and stay lost if that's what it takes, just to be that depth, to live it, and forget whether you're scared or not. Go there anyway. Perhaps next time you'll remember, this is a doorway and not an ending. *I am at the beginning of something precious and rare and essentially me.* Remember this, just one time, and you might find that bliss, and you might make it your own.

Q: When I was listening to you talk, initially, the picture that keeps coming to me is feeling like I'm swimming in quicksand or something, where I can't move and I feel pretty stuck, and I feel like I'm looking for help to get unstuck.... I feel like if I was to blaze my own path it would hurt people and that I'm already too much, and I think I want some help in figuring out...how to not be stuck, and also if this looking for someone to help me makes any sense for me.

Looking for someone to help you is useful for you. You do need that. But you're not stuck until you find it. You're not stuck at all. You will hurt things if you begin to act as yourself. There will be only small nicks and bruises in the things and people around you, but they will not come out unscathed. Your impact will be felt. There is no option but to allow yourself to hurt people

or to continue in your experience that you live in quicksand, that you can't move, or breathe, or speak freely. Those are your only two options. Let it be said that you will not hurt people to anywhere near the extent that you imagine you will, but you did not hear that and you won't right now believe it. So I say try your best, be yourself and see what happens, see what is scathed and if it cannot recover, and see what that burning does for you, for your own freedom and for your sense of helplessness. You in your essence are not a benign, soft presence in the world. The world doesn't need any more benign, soft presences than it already has; it needs you as you are. Hurt people a little bit, that's what will happen, that's what you must do, but live—aggressively, if that's what it takes. And keep looking for the help you want, but do not settle for someone who would turn you into someone you are not—it will never work anyway. You cannot learn to be a different person, you can only grow to appreciate who you already are. It is my sincerest prayer that you will, one day, appreciate that one.

Q: I've been in an environment this weekend where I've been able to be more in the energies of being vicious and perverse and intense, and...it feels so much like home...and that feels really good, and in the same context I had the opportunity to again encounter that jealousy...and I find over and over again that it's about my feelings of being unlovable just at some core level, and it feels like...I'm unlovable because I'm...vicious and perverse and intense, you know, there's this relationship, and I guess I mostly want to ask...just what is useful for me to know about all that right now....

The more you go home to that perverseness and that intensity, the more you will be forced to wonder what is lovable or unlovable about those qualities. Those are unlovable qualities to some people, and those people will never love you. Other people require a certain level of vitality and intensity that you have and that you bring out in them. Those people may love you. None of this matters, however, at all. None of this makes you lovable or unlovable because you cannot actually be inherently either of those things. You are stuck with nothing but your essential experience. That experience you call “unlovable,” and so I would say, because it is nothing but your experience, you must have it completely and absolutely, with no way out and no turning back. You must be unlovable. Be it. When someone doesn't like you, there is a chance to be it. When someone leaves you, or chooses another or threatens to choose another—there it is again, that experience you call unlovable. There is nothing there except your experience of it. Nothing else is real. The rest is just words and ideas. You want to eat so you should continue. You feel

devastated and so you should feel that. They are both there, if not simultaneously then alternatingly, and so they are both required of you. You cannot give one of them up; it is not even a matter of your choice. You are stuck with them both. And they will turn out to be more related than you know. But you are still just beginning this, and there will be much more to uncover about it. Allow all of it, L. That is your instruction.

Q: Seven years ago I had a lot of the structures of my life fall away, and I went into a heavy period of meditation where I was basically around the clock either meditating or writing for like a year and a half, and I thought I was really getting somewhere, metaphysically. And then things fell away just completely and...pretty much stayed that way, and I feel like instead of growing I regressed and I've lost any bit of grace that I might...[have] been able to integrate into my life, and...I don't seem to be getting anywhere.

When did it end?

Pardon?

When did it end, this period of meditation?

When things started falling away, you mean?

Right.

It's been...about 4 years.

And what is your practice now? Do you have one?

I'm doing writing. I've actually tried to go back to work that I used to have and...things just aren't happening along that line, so it just seems that I'm not supposed to be doing it—it's certainly not my joy anymore.

And do you even meditate just for yourself anymore?

I try to, not like I used to...but I don't believe...a lot of the things I used to believe..., a lot of the metaphysical... 'laws'—or whatever—that I grew up with believing..., they just seem hollow anymore, they don't...seem to have the same validity to me.

You were wrong about many things, but you cannot regress and you have not. The problem you have now is that you were certain about things that have turned out to be false, and you have no knowingness to take the place of those things. First, begin by digesting what I'm saying: you

cannot go backwards; it doesn't work that way. It doesn't mean that the progress you thought you were making was real, but it means that you learned something, something that was essential for you to learn. Right now, you have to start afresh in total uncertainty. Uncertainty is not something you like very much, but it's your best friend right now. It is the thing you need more than anything in the world. Where there is uncertainty there is space for grace. Certainty shuts out the possibility of it. You are in the rare and potent place of not knowing anything anymore. If you can stay sober in that place, then you can see things in a way you have never been able to see them before. When you sit, forget your formal practice. Begin by acknowledging that you don't know what God is, or what divinity means at all. And then, from that part of you that knows God is real, even if you know nothing about Him, that part of you that longs, that has come here only to make God's acquaintance, sit and look for Him. There is no blueprint anymore. Enlightenment is not the culmination of a series of stages marked by particular experiences; it has been badly described that way. Don't worry about enlightenment. Wonder about the God you long for. That is the God you will find, and that is what you truly and deeply want. Make space in your day for this wondering and this uncertainty. Make time for it, like food and rest. It is your nourishment, and the beginning of your new path.

The Sound of Rain is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the work of Emily Carson and making the wisdom that comes through her available to an expanding audience. For more information, visit us on-line at www.soundofrain.org.