**Help vs. Serve**

In recent years the question, "how can I help?", has become meaningful to

many people. But perhaps the real question is not how can I help? But **how**

**can I serve**?

Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality, it is not a relationship between equals. When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I am attentive to what is going on inside of me when I am helping, I find that I am always helping someone who is not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am. People feel this inequality. When we help, we inadvertently take away from people more than we could ever give them; we may diminish their self-esteem their sense of self-worth integrity, and wholeness; When I help, I am very aware of my own strength.

But we don't serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves. We draw

from all our experiences. Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, even our darkness serves. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness of life. Service is a relationship between equals.

Helping incurs debt. But serving, like healing, is mutual. When I help, I have a

feeling of satisfaction. When I serve, I have a feeling of gratitude. These are very different things.

Serving is also different from fixing. When I fix a person, I perceive them as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act. When I fix, I don't see the wholeness in the other person or trust the integrity of life in them. When I serve. I see and trust that wholeness.

There is a distance between us and whatever or whomever we are fixing. Fixing is a form of judgment. All fixing creates a distance, a disconnection. We cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected, that which we are willing to touch. We serve life not because it is broken but because it is holy.

A server knows that he or she is being used and has a willingness to be used

in the service of something greater, something essentially unknown. When we serve, we are always serving the same thing, we are the servers of the wholeness and the mystery of life. Fixing and helping is the work of the ego while service is the work of the

soul. Our service serves us as well as others.

Service rests on the basic premise that the nature of life is sacred, that life is a holy mystery that has an unknown purpose. From the perspective of service, we are all connected; all suffering is like my suffering and all joy is like my joy. The impulse to serve emerges naturally and inevitably from this way of seeing. Only service heals.