Spirituality
Soul Seeing



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Does hope come in sizes, like small, medium and large, depending on the season of the soul? One Christmas, I had a dream about a messenger: I had bought a bunch of bananas and when I put them on the kitchen counter, an exquisite little bird flew out, about the size of a beetle. It was a brilliant, iridescent royal blue, and began flying around the house.

I was worried about its safety, so I made a shelter for it in a jar. However, it seemed to want to be free, and kept flitting from room to room, with me chasing it. A friend arrived and in opening the door, the little bird escaped outside and disappeared. In the dream, I was distraught, rushing around trying to find it and concerned it could be stepped on by a passerby. "It's lost, it's lost," I kept lamenting, when suddenly a neighbor came over, and said, "No, it's fine, I found it and put it back in the house." I was overjoyed and returned home, where it settled upon my finger as I marveled at its beauty. It was like a jeweled ornament.

When I woke up, I realized that the bird represented hope, (in this case, in an extra-extra small size), symbolic of a problem I wasn't dealing with very well at the time. Sometimes, emotions, expectations and dreams can feel stepped on or lost, but then, like my practical, caring friend and neighbor, the presence of others can bring optimism and help through an action or kind word of inspiration.

My imaginary little bird that I dreamed of seemed to carry a message to me from Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for ..." We don't need to chase it and when situations seem too large to handle, faith (even just a little) can alight upon us when we least expect it. We can shelter and nurture it in the heart when need be, but it also likes to be free like the little bird … with space and room to grow, evolve and flourish. As a new year unfolds, is there someone you need to be the encouraging little bird to?



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When I shared my quote, "May the sacred bonds between friends and neighbors, shelter, freedom, faith and hope connect us all and change the world," with close friends, I asked them what the little bird's message would be to them personally. Dee Frye wrote, "Just because hope is tiny does not mean it doesn't have potential." Adolfo Quezada said, "Like the mustard seed, hope can come in small portions, yet have a tremendous effect on us."

Reflecting upon their compelling thoughts, my husband and I drove to town to run errands. It was bitterly cold, minus 30 below wind chill and very icy. I gripped Jerry's arm so I wouldn't fall as we walked across the parking lot. We encountered an elderly woman limping her way to her car and we felt concerned that she could slip.

My friendly husband called to her, "You need someone to hold on to!" She humorously replied, "I know, I'm trying but I can't find anyone!" We all chuckled, a warmhearted moment of connection in an ordinary parking lot.

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We continued our shopping, encountering immigrants of different nationalities and races, regular people like us just trying to make a living, live life and feel like they belong somewhere. Some seemed guarded, perhaps not trusting if we would be nice or not. We always go out of our way to smile and offer a cordial word, wondering about the well-being of the many we pass by.

Who will care? Who will be someone to hold on to? We think of those who have no one, of the vicious cruelties in the world, the despair, hopelessness, prejudice, fear, injustice, self-serving apathy, violence and hateful rhetoric. The list seems endless.

> Who will care? Who will be someone to hold on to?
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Feeling pensive on the drive home on the slick, dangerous roads, I observed the traffic, representing a sea of humanity. My thoughts returned to pondering the messages of the little bird from my dream and how poignant it was to hear responses from my friends, each voice unique and offering depth and ideas that hadn't occurred to me. What a gift people can be to each other, from all walks of life.

When we returned home to put away the Christmas decorations and move forward into the new year, I suddenly remembered my kindred friend Frances, who died years ago. When I asked her what her message to the world would be, she'd replied without hesitation, "Be kind. Be kind." Sometimes, when seen through the eyes of the soul, understanding the sum and substance of hope and faith doesn't get more profound than those two little words. They will always be something we can hold on to.