



Week Three: The Abundance of Circulation — How Does Life Move?

Reading: *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

A neighbor shares vegetables from an overflowing garden. Someone leaves a beloved book in a Little Free Library. An idea, a recipe, a kindness, or a word of encouragement passes from one person to another.

Something wonderful happens. When we put “our good” into circulation, the impact of the gift can keep increasing. It has the potential to keep moving, touching more lives, creating new possibilities, expanding, and generating goodness far beyond the original act of giving.

Robin Wall Kimmerer calls this the *gift economy*. In *The Serviceberry*, she wonders: If sunlight powers the circulation of life in nature, what powers the circulation of life and good among us? “Maybe it is love.”

What if love is not merely an emotion, but the very creative power that moves Life into expression? Love moves us beyond self-interest into greater Self-realization and Self-expression.

The serviceberry receives sunlight, water, nutrients, and the gifts of pollinators. It transforms what it receives into fruit that nourishes other creatures. Seeds travel. New life emerges. What the tree receives, Life transforms. What Life transforms, the tree brings into circulation.

Could this also be the way Life works in us and grows us?

We receive gifts of wisdom, love, creativity, ability, resources and experience. Yet these gifts are not complete simply because we possess them. They carry possibilities waiting to unfold through us. They carry the potential to grow us... and grow others as we share them.

Wisdom becomes guidance. Experience becomes compassion. Creativity becomes expression. Love becomes healing. Resources become opportunities. Giving becomes blessings.

The deeper purpose of abundance is not simply to have more, but to become more fully who we are... and allow that becoming to enrich Life.

Accumulation asks, “How much can I keep?” Circulation asks, “What can I contribute? What can I help make possible?”

Wise stewardship matters. We need financial stability, resources, and replenishment. But we are not merely here to gather the gifts of Life. We are here to give them expression. And perhaps that is the mystery of circulation: *What comes to us has the potential to grow us and become something greater through us.*

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” - 1 Corinthians 12:7



1. LOVE SETS THE GIFT IN MOTION

When we encounter something wonderful, our natural impulse is often to share it. We recommend a book, bring extra vegetables to a neighbor, teach someone a skill, or share the surplus of our good. We are simply moved to share... we are not calculating what will come back.

Other times, our giving may carry an unspoken expectation of repayment, recognition, appreciation, or some other return. Kimmerer invites us to consider the distinction between a gift and a transaction, and examine the consciousness from which we give.

Discuss

- Recall something you shared simply because you loved it and wanted someone else to experience it. What motivated you?
- When have you given something with an unspoken expectation of receiving something in return? How did that expectation affect your experience and/or relationship?

2. WHAT AM I HERE TO CULTIVATE?

Receiving is only the beginning. What we have or receive carries possibilities waiting to be developed. Wisdom can become guidance. Ability can become skill. Experience can deepen into compassion. Resources can become opportunities that enrich the lives of others.

We can spend our lives trying to add more to ourselves. More credentials. More wealth. More status. More possessions. More approval. But the spiritual life invites us to consider something deeper. What is seeking to unfold through my life? What wisdom is seeking expression? What love is seeking embodiment? What is seeking to come alive through me that is not just for me?

The measure of our flourishing is not merely what we become, but what our becoming makes possible.

Discuss

- What gift or capacity in you is asking to be developed - not for recognition, but because something meaningful could grow from it?



3, RECEIVING IS PART OF CIRCULATION

The gifts of life circulate in countless ways... through money, time, wisdom, hospitality, creativity, encouragement, care for one another, and care for the Earth. Sometimes we keep these gifts moving by sharing what we have. Other times, by allowing ourselves to receive.

We often celebrate the generosity of the giver while overlooking the equally important role of receiving. We may resist receiving because we value independence, feel unworthy, or fear becoming indebted to someone else.

Yet receiving is not a sign of weakness or simply a passive act. Sometimes our greatest participation in the circulation of Life is to welcome another's generosity, accept the care we need, or allow ourselves to be replenished.

Circulation requires both the willingness to give and the openness to receive.

Discuss

- Is receiving help harder for you than giving it? What does that reveal about your beliefs and ideas of strength, worthiness, or independence?
- When has receiving someone's gift brought healing or helped something new grow in your life?

4. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CIRCULATION?

Not all movement is life-giving. Resources can circulate among those who already have plenty while others remain excluded. Generosity can become another strategy for getting something back. The deeper question is: Whom does this movement sustain?

Kimmerer's teaching points us toward reciprocity and the common good. Our spiritual application asks us to use what we have wisely, replenish what we draw upon, and widen the circle of those who can flourish. Rest, responsible reserves, fairness, and healthy boundaries belong in that picture.

Discuss

- Can you recognize a gift, resource, or opportunity in your life... that currently stops with you... when it could nourish something beyond you?



5. CLOSING ACTIVITY — WHAT AM I HERE TO CIRCULATE?

Take a quiet moment to reflect. The purpose of this exercise is not to pressure anyone to give more. It is to notice how Life is already moving through us... and where we may be invited to participate more consciously.

Around the Circle: Invite each person to complete one sentence, without commentary or advice from the group. Make additional rounds as time allows.

- Something I have received that continues to bless my life is...
 - Something I am ready to cultivate more fully is...
 - A gift I have been holding back that I could begin to share is...
 - If my life is about more than accumulation, I want it to be about...
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PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK: FOLLOW THE GIFT

Once each day, notice one gift moving through your life... a meal, an idea, encouragement, shared knowledge, help, time, a resource, or beauty in nature.

- **RECEIVE:** What people, relationships, and elements of the Earth made this possible?
- **CULTIVATE:** What is this gift awakening or making possible in me?
- **CIRCULATE:** What small, fitting action could keep its benefit moving?

This might mean thanking someone, sharing a skill, offering support, passing along a useful resource, tending a living place - or accepting needed care. Let the action arise from wisdom rather than obligation.

DEEP PONDERING

If accumulation is not the ultimate purpose of my life, what am I here to become... and what might flourish because I am here... and I was here?