

## Essences as Life for Life – by Cynthia Alves

During Essence courses, an essential question to explore is, "What are Essences?". While we talk about them in many ways, and *know* within ourselves and through our experience what they 'are', I find that it is in keeping the question open and answers fluid (don't miss the pun there) that aims us toward the truth. The more ways we have of talking about life, which Essences are of, rather than hunting for The Answer, the more we can communicate in unitive ways with more people.

The sooner we move our perceptions beyond stuff in bottles, the better. Our societal paradigms lead us to imagine them like liquid aspirins (but The Good Guys, and Better Than because...), as a thing we use that 'does' something 'to' us, and that is not knowing what they are. And the scope or context within which they may help us is limited.

To plug into knowing what they *are*, we need to become aware of the life of life. Does this sound daft? Consider this: do you believe your perception of animate and inanimate to be the truth? Or, how *alive* do you actually *feel* your car to be, your computer, and even your daily food. Or, hand on heart do you actually experience yourself generally to be a living thing amongst what is mostly just Thing. What about the water you drink, wash with and bathe in? Might that also be alive and conscious, though with different expression and means of communication than your human organism?

A common answer my students offer to "What are Essences?" is, "The life force of a plant (etc.) held in water." Here, the plant *has* a life force, and the liquid stuff contains it. The illusion of physical solidity and primacy speaks, and parts of life perceived as separate.

This isn't mere rhetoric and hair splitting! Our language use does reflect and express our perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and level of consciousness. "Unity" is now a jargon word for something we deeply yearn to know. Yet until we find a way to dissolve the illusory barriers between what is alive and what is not, we cannot know unity. Until we find our route into knowing that the earth's life IS or life here now, we cannot know more than a tiny glimpse of the full reality of essences. When we come to recognize the nature 'around' us as consciousness, life of intelligence, and learn ways to honestly communicate with Nature, then we come to know that Essences are a means to co-create, agents and messengers of life.

For me, it has taken a discipline of pausing often in the garden to just be there, of standing at my cooker and taking moments to imagine the amazing life of what holds those molecules together to 'be' my kettle, pot, food; and taken the help of the Essences themselves to begin to perceive this all as living.

Life comes alive. A day comes and we look at what we are putting into our water, our body's water, into our breath, our Earth's air. I don't mean the Big Bad Industrial guys. I mean the daily 'cleaners' of body and home, which are in fact 'dirtiers'. And these considerations cannot be separated from "What are Essences?" Our behaviour, our mundane daily choices express our qualities of ignorance and awareness, of how we are deciding the boundaries of life and inhibiting its flow and health and living, or raising its vitality and allowing its power.

All of this and more is part and parcel of understanding what Essences are. Some aspects of Life helping others to awaken; helping the mind expand and hatch out from me-in-here tiny life, letting go of personal as centre of life, and spreading our consciousness wings, beaming out the true light of our being. Living Earth awareness.

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