

Three Principles of the Universe

What we refer to in these three principles is the interdependent dynamic energy that courses through every aspect of life, the three primordial patterns that are present in all levels of existence, the governing intentionality of all, the way the universe orders its creative display of energy everywhere, in everything and at any time – from the flaring forth of 13.7 billion years ago, right down to this present moment and onwards into every future expression of life. Each of us is different from the other, each one of us a unique manifestation of the Divine. We all have our own distinctive gifts. This is the first of the three cosmological principles in its creative display of life. It is known as the cosmic principle of [differentiation](#) (diversity). We have each received the capacity to experience mystery and to give expression to this mystery through the voice within, the inner summons. This is the cosmic principle of [subjectivity](#) (interiority, inner depths). We are not copies of one another but rather creative expressions of the Divine, of mystery, of life itself. Together we are all bonded into a pattern of relationship. This is the third principle – [communion](#) (community or interconnectedness).

From the Flaring Forth to the creation of the elements, from the galaxies to our solar system, down through time to our planet Earth, which as far as we know is the most highly, differentiated being in the universe, we experience the cosmological principle of differentiation at work. From the shaping of the hydrogen atom to the first bacteria, from life in the ocean to our early ancestors who stood up in the plains life has been expanding into a greater complexity of being. Increased subjectivity or self expression or self organisation led to increased complexity out of which unfolded the development of the human brain and self conscious awareness in the human. And yet, nothing is completely itself without everything else. We need one another. We belong in communion. We need the human touch of love, the shoulder to cry on, a listening ear, the word of encouragement but we also need the feel of the earth beneath our feet, the gentle brush of the breeze, the warmth of sunshine on our face, water for life, water to soothe and refresh, nourishing food of the earth for our bodies, time to do and to be, stillness, moonlight, autumn time and spring time, death and new life... We belong within the web of life, a part of not apart from.

We live in a universe that is expanding all of the time. This expansion is into diversity. We know we are all different and yet we so often we come before the other with certain expectations as to how he or she should be. The cosmic principle of differentiation offers a wonderful invitation to surrender... to surrender to the overwhelming expression of diversity, to the abundance... to let everything and everyone break open my preconceptions, my narrow mindedness... to allow the other, the stranger, the strangeness in myself and the strangeness in the other to stretch and expand my loving. It invites me to make room for the other, to be vulnerable before the limitations of myself and of the other. The invitation of Jesus of the Gospels was always into openness, into magnanimity, into experiencing the spaciousness of God, allowing the other, in all of his or her difference to stretch me and in so doing to expand my image of neighbour. We have it all. It is just that sometimes we just don't know what to do with it... so we play small. We diminish the other and ourselves too, protecting ourselves from the lavishness of the gift that is offered. It is like we want to tidy up the extravagance... the too '*muchness*' of life, refusing to cast ourselves upon the abundance!

How does a papaya seed know its potential as a large papaya plant? It is because of the cosmic principle of subjectivity. Subjectivity is an effort at naming the ability of each being to become itself. It is about the interior dimension of things... the inner principle of being. "This is the covenant that I will make with them says the Lord. I will put my laws on their heart." (Heb. 10:16) Interiority is everything to do with listening to and faithfulness to the inner law that is written in the deep recesses of my own heart. This has nothing to do with a law that is imposed from outside of me, a fitting into another's will, another person's understanding of what I should be or what I should become. Living within this principle I take my birth right of creativity seriously, trusting my own

inner wisdom, my unique movement into God. As I do so and because I do so I am challenged to trust, encourage and support the other's unique creative expression, believing in and nurturing the natural, intrinsic, creative unfolding and becoming of all life forms.

The third governing principle of the universe is communion. Relationship is the essence of existence. Relationship is nothing to do with repression and being at war with myself. Many of us here grew up in a religious tradition of rejection of body. Our bodies were not to be trusted, they were experienced as barriers to life and the spiritual life becomes an exercise in dis-embodiment. What we do not learn to love we can never learn to live for. What we do not appreciate we will never want to save. If my journey into life is about anything at all it must be about a welcoming of myself back into my own body and as I do so I will find my way back to the body of the earth, remembering and reclaiming my oneness with all beings... that I am unique, different, wonderfully made, a creative expression of mystery, an equal member, with all members, in the sacred community of life.... becoming again what I always was – a vision of possibility -- loved into being...in a universe that is always expanding, a universe in which and through which I am invited to partake in this expansion by risking my love.... now, in this moment... reckless loving... passionate loving from which I came and for which I am coming into being.

-- Based on Reflections by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme,
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