

Just Say No!

DAVID SPANGLER

*This article is excerpted from the recently published *Apprenticed to Spirit* by the well-known spiritual teacher David Spangler. In it he discusses his twenty-seven-year relationship with an inner-plane entity, whom he describes as “a very wise, experienced, and very loving presence.” At the outset the entity told him, “You may call me ‘John.’ It’s not my name, as I do not have a name as you do, but I can see it’s a name you like, so I’m happy to use it.” Spangler also writes, “John often spoke of himself and his colleagues as a school on the inner [plane].” This passage offers some advice regarding relationships with inner-plane contacts. —Ed.*

In beginning our work together, John said there was one basic rule he wanted to give me. It grew out of his perception of us as partners and out of his understanding of the role and relationship of a non-physical being to a physical one. “In dealing with me,” he said, “you can always say no.” He went on to elaborate.

As a child of God, your freedom and sovereignty are vital. They cannot be infringed if we are to work together successfully. We must honor the sacredness in each other and the unique value each of us possesses, along with every other person and being. Therefore, if you have any question or concern about anything I might ask you to do or any suggestion I may make, you must say no. This is true for any inner being whom you may encounter, no matter how radiant or exalted it may seem. If you ever have any doubt or question, just say no.

This is very important. Along with love, it is the root of our relationship. You are not here to obey me, nor I you. We are here to collaborate together from our unique strengths. We are here to be partners. I take your willingness to cooperate for granted, but if I cannot also depend on your ability and willingness to stand in your own sovereignty, authority, and judgment and to make decisions for yourself, then our partnership will be impaired.

This may seem obvious. A relationship in which one party can never say no to the other is not a relationship at all but the domination of one person by another. But when it comes to relating to inner beings or spiritual teachers, relationships based on obedience are not at all uncommon. In fact, I’ve often found that there is an assumption that simply because it doesn’t have a physical body, an inner being has access to divine wisdom and insight and therefore is an expert who should be listened to unquestioningly.

Once after a lecture a woman came up to me to ask my advice. “I’m in contact with inner beings,” she said. “They’re always giving me advice and information and telling me what to do. It’s very confusing, and I don’t know what I should be doing.”

“That’s simple,” I said. “Just say no to them.”

“Just say no? I can do that? No one’s ever told me I could do that!”

This may seem silly, but I've run into this attitude frequently in my career as a spiritual teacher. Certainly among the metaphysical groups with which I was familiar in Phoenix in the early 1960s, establishing communication with nonphysical beings was considered a very desirable achievement; the idea of then saying no to what they had to say or treating them with anything other than reverence was practically unheard of.

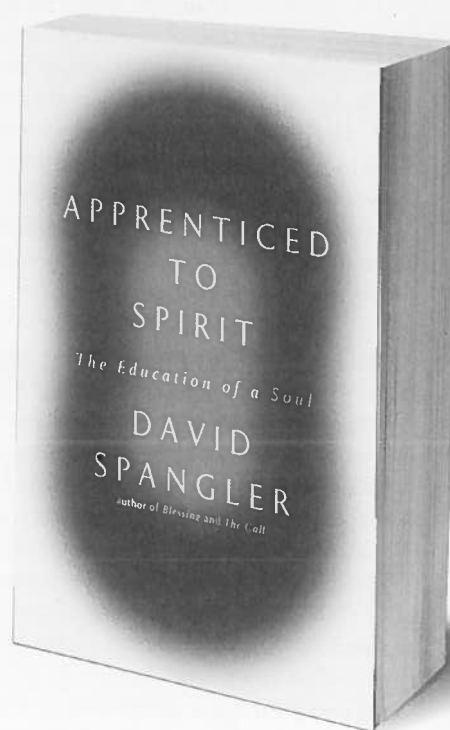
This attitude has a long pedigree. From the oracles of ancient times to the spirit guides of modern spiritualism or the inner adepts of Theosophy, there has always been a sense that the inner worlds possess superior knowledge to what we can find here on earth and that we should relate to inner beings as teachers, guides, and experts.

This was definitely not John's point of view. He said at the beginning that he was not my teacher but a "colleague" and partner. At one point he said:

We who live in the higher vibrational worlds do not necessarily have superior knowledge than you. What we have is a different perspective, which may allow us to see further or more broadly and holistically than you. That perspective can certainly be valuable and helpful, particularly in knowing how an action or situation fits into a larger context. But our knowledge is not absolute nor is it always appropriate or accurate. Just as you may have trouble grasping conditions on the levels where I function, so I cannot always grasp conditions on your plane. This is why we collaborate and blend our insights and perspectives together.

At other times, he had other things to say on this matter.

The primary issue is not who has superior knowledge but who has responsibility and bears the consequences for decisions made and actions taken. Of equal importance is the right to learn and to grow. If you simply obey another, even if that other has greater wisdom and insight, you are not exercising the muscles of your own discernment and choice, from which your own wisdom and insights may come. Listen with respect and attention, yes. Obey, no. Make your own decisions.



The most important gift that a person has is his or her sovereignty. This is a gift, an anointing, from the sacred. To diminish or infringe upon another's sovereignty is to trespass on the most holy ground. You are not our children. You are our equals in the sight of God.

In all we do—we who serve the sacredness in you—our concern is to preserve the uniqueness, the integrity, and the will of those with whom we work. In our interactions, there can be no coercion or compulsion. The uniqueness and character of your will and your ability to make your own choices must be maintained and honored. Sovereignty should not be violated.

It is not our place on the inner to tell you what you must do. We are colleagues, not authorities. When you contact us, you are not enrolling in a military organization. We have no authority or right to compel obedience. No higher being will ever put your sovereignty or integrity in question or jeopardy. Should you ever encounter a presence that attempts to command you or abrogate your will, just say no and break the contact. Such a being is acting unwisely and against the principles that govern our interaction with your realm.

There are busybodies upon the inner planes as much as in your world. There are those who have a desire for control, not necessarily for what you would think of as evil purposes, but because of a lack of respect for you and to ensure that their vision of goodness is carried out. Such beings do not occupy the higher realms, however. If you keep yourself always aligned with the highest within you, if you honor and respect yourself, you will either not encounter them or you will dismiss them if you do.

Over the years, I've discovered that the power to say *no* enhances the capacity to say *yes*. Knowing that I'm under no obligation or pressure to agree or to obey, and that I'm respected by my inner contacts as a colleague, I have no resistance to their suggestions. I can evaluate them, and more often than not, I will accept because I have great respect for their wisdom and their caring. I feel empowered in this process. And it began with John's first lesson: Each of us has the right to just say no. ■



DAVID SPANGLER is a visionary and spiritual teacher and is the author of several books, including *The Call*, *Everyday Miracles*, and *Blessing*. This excerpt is reprinted from his latest book, *Apprenticed to Spirit: The Education of a Soul*, by arrangement with Riverhead Books, a member of Penguin Group (USA), Inc. Copyright © 2011 by David Spangler.