

Transforming and Lifting Society through Beauty and Culture

By Rosanne Sands

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One of woman's primary roles is to live in and create beauty and to try to lift the culture to a higher level. Beauty is anything that lifts the consciousness out of the ego. When you see a garden full of vibrant colored flowers, your heart sings. When you hear beautiful music, it takes you out of yourself. When you see a beautiful painting, you're taken right into it. It lifts you up, and your personality soars into another plane of existence. When you are reading poetry or prose and you come to a part that lifts the whole consciousness, you're experiencing beauty that is literally magic.

Beauty speaks to the heart. The arts and high culture are so important for spiritual consciousness. And without spiritual consciousness, we will not end war or stop the ecological destruction of our Mother Earth or end hunger and cruelty. We need to lift our consciousness to a higher level, and one way we all can do that is through beauty. The artists, musicians, poets, sculptors, playwrights, storytellers and dancers—all the artists are leaders of spirit and culture and bring hope for the world.

The mothers, grandmothers, aunts, teachers who introduce their children to beauty and culture are not only feeding the child's soul, but they are serving the whole world. The cultural dimension of life is more related to the right brain, to intuition, feeling, and spirit. Women are the guardians of the cultural. And culture is one key to the economic and political decisions we make in our families, communities, government and world.

My own mother understood the importance of beauty and culture. My childhood was full of difficulties, but fortunately, my mother had the soul of an artist and she kept it from being too dark and boring. When I was nine years old, we had the most remarkable Christmas. My mother was fighting cancer, sometimes working as a waitress to keep food on the table and sometimes flat on her back. The utilities were overdue, and finally the gas company disconnected us a few days before Christmas. We had no gas for heat or cooking, but we did have a big fireplace.

So on Christmas Eve night, my mother put on the Nutcracker Suite and made a cheery blaze in the fireplace. She wrapped baking potatoes and corn on the cob in aluminum foil and put them in the coals to bake. All five of us children grabbed colorful pillows and began to dance to the happy music, pretending to be ants on the way to a very special picnic. We had a cozy feast surrounded by the smell of the tree and wood smoke, and

after dinner, we drew pictures of what we would give each other if we could. We wrapped them in last year's Christmas paper and put them under the tree. Then she read us the Christmas story from the Bible so we would remember what Christmas is really about, the birth of Christ who came to teach us to love one another. That was one of the most wonderful Christmases I ever had. Mother used beauty and creativity to lift us to a high level out of the dark depression of poverty.

When we live in a world of beauty, in that heightened consciousness, we are living in the Other World in the midst of this world. We feel the magic and joy of life, and our hearts are more open. Children and animals feel it and are attracted to it. The most important thing in the world next to God consciousness is to live in beauty.

I once read about a sensitive boy who went to a church at Christmas and the flowers and altar were so beautiful that he fainted. And once when I was at my neighbor's house, I saw the most beautiful sunset, deep rose, purple and indigo, and I was lifted into a place of Oneness. I couldn't talk and began to cry from the bliss and ecstasy. We have probably all had those kinds of experiences.

How can we women who see violence and sex in movies and on TV, fast food restaurants serving up fat for our children, our sons and daughters going to war, forests ripped out, mountains carved up, and rivers and oceans filled with oil and pollution help to lift all that ugliness to a higher level of beauty?

We begin with our own psycho-spiritual transformation and then guide and influence the children in our lives, as well as the family and the community. But we don't have the time or luxury to reduce our energies to just our own family and community anymore. Lifting our society as a whole to a new level of culture, consciousness and beauty may be one of our most important roles.

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