

The Seekers Forum Transcript

The Thing With Feathers: An Interview with Agapi Stassinopoulos

December 2021



Mark: Welcome, Agapi Stassinopoulos. It's so wonderful to see you. Thank you for being with us in The Seekers Forum.

Agapi Stassinopoulos: Thank you so much, Mark. I love what you do, I love your community, and I honor everything that you do to bring people more connected to themselves.

Mark: Thank you so much. I wanted to start off by asking you how you came to write this book. I know it came out of a very dark time for all of us. How did you come to write this book about prayer?

Agapi: It's very interesting how moments of inspiration come to us and we get these a ha moments. I tell you, specifically how it came to me, there was a friend of mine who had written a book about the body and healing. She came over to visit me. She was an acupuncturist. I said to her, her name is actually Amen, I said, "Amen, let's take your book," she brought me the copies, "and bless it. Bless every page so that the book can go out charged." You will move away from the book. It's not your book. It's the healing energy that's going out through these pages. We put our hands on the book and we blessed it. I did a prayer from my heart and I felt such a spirit come through. She cried and she said, "This is so beautiful. That's what I want." I said, "Of course, you don't want to be pressured promoting a book that is about healing."

I then flashed into moments in my life that people have prayed for me. In the book, I have a specific prayer when my spiritual teacher prayed for me at a very difficult time in my life. I write about that and how he helped me through the crossroads of a time. How, with my friends, we would call, what I call calling in the light together. At a moment of difficulty with me, or with a friend, or in my family, we would just pray. It just occurred to me, I want to write a book about the power of prayer. I made a proposal, [chuckles] which actually I was sitting on and I kept going – You know how you do a proposal for a book and it's too much and you feel, "Oh, why? I could never do a whole book about this." Bless my agent who said to me, he kept asking for it, "I want this proposal on my desk by the 10th of January," I remember he said to me in the New Year. "I don't care if it's good or not good."

You always need somebody to push you a little bit over the edge. I called a friend of mine who's an editor and I said, "Let's work on this." We worked on it and we sent it. He said, "I love it." He sent it to my editor at Penguin Random House at Harmony. My editor who did the last book said, "I love it. We have a book." I'd been talking about this in the meantime for a year to people and to my editor, so it was a progression. Then I got a contract. I had a deadline, and hello, the pandemic happens.

[laughter]

I'm now in Los Angeles with my family on lockdown and I have a deadline for a book. I have a year, but you have to start writing it. That's a whole other process. Then what happened for me is that – I want to encourage people who are listening to this who want to write a book or do anything, find your way of doing it. I can't sit in front of a computer. I hired a person who I feel compatible with, and I dictate, I speak, because I'm more of a narrator and a speaker, rather than somebody who writes. I had to honor that part of myself because when I speak, I get the connection and I get the person receiving my message. I sat in my garden. I walked, I sat by the lemon tree that we have in our garden that we planted for my mother. I walked and dictated. I cried and dictated. I was frustrated and wrote. I realized,

the profound thing about this book, which I actually love the title, *Speaking with Spirit*, was about speaking with spirit. That it was about, “Listen, I am really frustrated. I’m really unhappy. I cannot see my friends. I can’t go to the market. We can’t gather.”

In that fear, and in that despair – I’m a complete and utter extrovert. I don’t think you are like that. I think you’re much more of an introvert. I was hurting. Honestly, Mark, I felt I was in exile. Out of that, I had to expand my consciousness to open up, and to go deeper into myself. Of course, the Zooms were going on, the meditations, the seminars. Everything was going on, but I felt like I was in a straitjacket that I constantly had to breathe to expand it. That became the prayer.

Mark: Prayer comes out of times of turmoil and difficulty. It’s not a gentle speaking-to-God necessarily. It can come out of rage. It can come out of terrible pain. Isn’t that right?

Agapi: Absolutely, it can come out of the specific moment that we get upset that something happens to us. Anything from being stuck in traffic, to our significant other saying, “I want a divorce.” To your boss calling you and saying, “We have to terminate you.” To your child coming home and saying, “Mom, or Dad, I’m being bullied.” To not having money to pay your rent. To slipping and hurting your knee, which just happened to my sister. She was walking happily in the street and we were having a wonderful walk, and she tripped and fell. It’s in the moment that you go, “This is the moment that I have to bring the spirit in.” It can happen in celebrations, in wonderful moments of happiness and celebration, and the birth of your child, or your grandchild. Somebody proposing to you. Falling in love. Completing a new book. Writing a song, painting, making a soufflé. What I say is, everything is prayer. It’s a relationship with your God.

I had this wonderful moment the other day on the podcast when we were talking and this woman said to me, “Oh my God, I just realized that what you are talking about is that God lives inside of me as me.” I went, “Hallelujah.”

[laughs]

Yes, yes. It’s not like Mark has the answers, or Agapi has the answers, or Thich Nhat Hanh has the answers, or Eckhart Tolle has the answers, or the teachers. No, you have the answers. You have the answers so let’s open up the gate. You are a teacher, I’m a teacher, I’m a student, you are a student, but each one of us guides and says, “Let me pray for you and see how that will awaken you to you.” That’s why I believe in the power of prayer because I would pray for anybody now. I’ll pray at podcasts. I say to the person, “Do you want to find your love? Let me pray for you.” I feel it. I feel it in my bones. There might be times where I call you, Mark, and I say, “Pray from me,” because I just had a testing going on.” Believe me, as you and I talked at the beginning, when you are about to teach these things, you are going to get tested.

Mark: Right. Prayer is a way of connecting with ourselves? Is that how you see it?

Agapi: Prayer is a way of connecting with a higher power in us, which is ourselves. It’s not the lower nature. It’s like the lower nature, which is the ego, the personality, the body, the emotions. Lower, not bad lower, the lower vibration bows down or rises up, however, you want to call it, in reverence to your maker, who, if you think about it, we have 36 trillion cells that are making us right now so, what I call an Agapi or a Mark the summing up of who we

think we are, is not who we are. We are way more than that, that it's invisible. It's the soul that breathes us. It's the divine that is so unknown.

If any of us could describe it, it will be phenomenal, but we can't. It's the mystical, it's the mysterious, it's the one that you have to get very quiet and still in reverence, or when you hear a poem or a piece of music, or when you look up at a sunset and its awe and you're speechless, and you're breathless and you say, "It took my breath away."

That moment is that consciousness, which we call God, which is not a being, but it's a state of being that we can all go to. It's in us, but we have to rise to meet it because inner vibration of the mind, and the rumination that we all go through and the emotional body, we have to quiet in that, we have to find harmony, we have to synchronize with that vibration and that is the prayer that is the meditation. That is the contemplation.

Thoreau maybe did it while he was walking in the woods, Mozart maybe he did while he was writing symphonies but it doesn't mean that the human lower nature doesn't shake. Does that make sense? When you really get into the spirit, that other part can really be afraid.

Mark: So it's fear and trembling that can happen when we connect to that energy within us?

Agapi: I think so. I think it can be bliss. I think it can be peace. I think it can be love. I think it can be expansion. Have you ever been lying in bed and you hear your breath going and you can't quite fall asleep and you go, "Who made this body? Where am I going now? I'm falling asleep and the mind —" It's like this moment of transition between the physicality of you to spiritual parts of you that are so unknown, but we can know them through the prayer.

When you start to hear your spirit speak to you, the whisper of the spirit. When you don't know what to do next about something, when you don't know if this is the right person for you to be in a relationship with, when you are stuck about raising funds for a company, when you are about to hire someone. There are like myriads of situations where you don't know and if you basically shut up and listen, the spirit comes in and guides you and tells you and that's the relationship, that's the conversation, that to me is the magic. We call it prayer, but it really is a bowing down of reverence to the higher part of you, or it's not even higher, the deeper part of you.

Mark: That feels to me like something that we need today more than ever, particularly, when it comes to hope. Emily Dickinson said that, "Hope is the thing with feathers." It's the thing that elevates us. It's the thing when we're down and out that grows wings and lifts us out of where we are. What's the connection between prayer and hope do you think, Agapi?

Agapi: Oh, huge. I think it's huge, and thank you for bringing that up because when we feel alone, we are in despair. Mark, if somebody said to me, "What is the one message you would like to leave behind in your life?" Not leave behind but communicate. If you had one thing to communicate this to human beings, what would it be? It's that you're not alone. We're not alone and I think when we are alone, and we feel like we're alone, we're in despair.

It's a terrible feeling to experience when you feel there's no one there for you and even if you are in relationship with friends when you're going through a difficult time, and we all know those times to feel that you are loved, that you are protected, that you are embraced in your difficulty, that your maker walks with you, the beloved walks with you. I am walking the

path of really knowing that. I just want to be very clear that in no way do I feel – I feel sometimes I wrote this book for myself.

[chuckles]

Mark: I do.

Agapi: I feel like, God, I needed this message for me. I have a lot of love and passion to pass it on because I'm learning and I'm always happy when somebody says, "Oh, this is what I learned, let me share it with you." I love this quote from Raymond Carver, I have at the first page of the book, "Did you get what you wanted from this life even so?" "I did." "What did you want?" "To call myself beloved, to feel myself beloved on this earth."

Mark: So beautiful, so beautiful.

Agapi: Because when you feel beloved, it doesn't matter, you do what you do, you don't do what you don't do. People love you, people don't love you, situations happen and you say, "It's okay." Because part of our age is that we don't feel loved. We don't feel seen. We don't feel honored. One of the things I said to you just before we started is that I have such gratitude because from the moment I met you, I always felt an honoring about who I am and my work and I felt, this is a man that sees me and loves me. To receive that and how much I honor and love you, what you do and how you help so many people unleash their creativity. When we honor each other like that, it feels like the kingdom, it feels, I think, like the kingdom of heaven because how we really do know the spirit is through each other.

Mark: That's right. Do you have a poem about hope or a prayer about hope that you could share with us?

Agapi: Yes. I love that you call them poems because they're like poems. I have something that I wrote about fear because, Mark, I was thinking, why is it that we don't pray? Why do you think even for myself, when I am in my difficult moments, why is it that we don't pray, and I tell you what I think for me, what do you think it is for you?

Mark: Well, so often when we're in a bad place, we get self-absorbed, and we close down and we stop doing the very things that we need to open back up. Pain can make you quite selfish.

Agapi: Yes and it can make you so vulnerable. I think, for me, I don't pray in my moments of difficulty or contraction, what I call. I don't pray because my fear upstages my higher nature, so it blocks the river. It's like a wall goes up, and I shut down because I'm upset about something and I've judged it and the judgment closes it down or I judge the other person who did that to me and then you're locked in.

At that moment, you see, I think this is where the power comes in and this is where the muscle is. If you work out that muscle, like we all do, lift weights for our biceps, let's say, and the more you lift it, the easier it becomes, the less you lift it, the harder it becomes, so if we at that moment – you can go the better angle of your nature and say, "Okay, light." I go, "Light, I need you. Light, I need you." That's all I say, Mark. Light because the light in me knows what to do, so immediately I bond with that part. Now I still feel the disturbance, I still feel the upsetness, but I'm asking for the light to penetrate. My experience is that when I call it, like I win. That higher power starts to win over and brings the peace.

Dear beloved, as I move forward in my journey I ask to find the courage to move past my fear knowing that the mighty spirit that lives in me is so much bigger than my fear.

Show me how to transform my fear into trust and my insecurity into confidence. Show me how to transform my scared voice into my sacred voice. Let me walk this path step-by-step holding your invisible hand, hearing the inner guidance in me.

Although I might not feel it fully or comprehend it, I'm willing to let my higher power take the lead. Show me where the opportunities are and lead me to the support I need so I can see my vision clearly and draw strength from it I understand that the fear I'm experiencing is produced by the primitive part of my brain that is driven to survive.

When I turn to prayer and meditation, I become quiet and still. In that space, I feel the presence of love, compassion, and joy because I remember that I don't have to give in to my fear. As I say these words, I feel a release of what binds me and keeps me from moving ahead. I feel a wave of happiness in knowing that I don't have to live in wishful thinking, that I can live in action. I move from "I can't" to "I am." As I move forward in taking the next steps, I see the strength that clears my pathway so I can move with determination, trust and positive energy, which are always available to me.

As I speak these words, I release the illusion that I'm walking alone, and I receive the support that shows me in practical small ways that I can expand beyond my fear, so be it.

Mark: Beautiful. So beautiful. When you write that poem, or your poem, do you sit down and do it all at once or you're reciting it to somebody else?

Agapi: I am. To me, that's where the power comes in personally. These prayers Mark just came through me. I never edited almost a single word. They were like that. They were done. They were jewels coming in. When I read them now, I get lifted and I get the energy from them. I get the gift. Now the text, I had to do a lot of editing, of course, and we had to write it and rewrite it. The preface had twelve drafts itself.

[chuckles]

That's part of the writing process. For me, my gift has been to open up and receive them and not judge them and they would say, "Oh, we could say this, or we could say that."

Mark: I'd like to know, when did you realize that you were a spiritual seeker?

Agapi: In the book and in the preface, I have this question and I say if you're at the dinner party or out with new people, and instead of saying, "What do you do?" You say, "Can you describe to me the first time you knew there was a presence with you that there was God?" Now, I'm going to ask you first, can you tell me when was the time? I want to know.

Mark: You know what happened when I was a little kid. I was just about six or seven years old and I can remember seeing actually a dead bird. I had this moment of being transfixed and wondering, is that the bird or is the bird the thing that flew away? I had this moment of feeling like there was something bigger than the body. It was really profound. It was programmed with profound.

Agapi: When you were six and seven?

Mark: Yes. I was a very little kid.

Agapi: You see that's amazing because that's what I feel. Everybody has an experience like that when they're little. Isn't it a great question to ask people?

Mark: It is.

Agapi: Remember the first time you knew there was God. Even people who say, "I don't believe – Very rarely do you hear people say, "I don't think there was any time ever." I think if you go back and you ask them to really remember, they will. For me, I remember I was three or so, and I had a young girl who was looking after me, and she was talking about God and I said, "Can God see you everywhere?" She said, "Yes. God can see you everywhere." I would hide in the closet and I said, "Can God see me here?" She would say, "Yes." I would hide under the bed and behind the chairs of drawers and under the cover so that was my game.

This is such a faint recollection, but I remember when I was a teenager and my parents had separated and I was feeling devastated and I would lie in bed. I was so unhappy and I remember crying out, "Help me?" I was twelve and I remember I would feel this hand, this caress over my hand and I would fall asleep. Consciously, I never said, "Oh there's God." I just remember the comfort. Years later, I've written about this, *Unbinding Heart*, my book after the *Gods and Goddesses*. That was very much about my soul's journey.

There was a very specific moment where I was doing hours and hours of yoga and I was reading every spiritual book you can imagine and Aurobindo and Paramahansa Yogananda, the biography of a yogi. I was holding the book and I fell asleep. I was awakened in the morning, and I fell asleep right at the part that Yogananda talks about the Yogis being in the mountains and transcending their bodies, that their bodies lived for thousands of years. He said they would go in and out of the body, but they sustained the body as an anchor. It was this realization that we are not the body. We are beyond the body. We are the spirit.

I woke up that morning and the light was coming in from the windows. I just fell to my knees saying, "I believe I know I'm a child of God." I had a spiritual awakening. I was absolutely direct and up until then, I was 23 years old. I did not believe in anything. I believed that I was this Agapi that wanted to be an actress. I was studying acting. I had come to Hollywood to do a movie that didn't work out. I was in transition and living away from my family. When I looked back, it was such a setup. It was a setup of actually –

Mark: You mean a spiritual setup.

Agapi: Yes. It was a setup for me to awaken. I remember I went and saw Baba Muktananda then. He was a guru and I told him the experience and he said to me, "Your soul wanted to wake up that you woke yourself up." He said, "A lot of times people need it." I've read this great phrase, Mark that even yearning for God is good karma, let alone finding God. Then after that, I started to go through my spiritual journey with John Roger, who is my teacher who passed away, but that became my essential, spiritual teachings, which is the movement of spiritual inner awareness. It's an organization and a church that is based in Los Angeles but the teachings, what moved me, it was the awakening of the heart. It was the soul transcendence. That it was a path to knowing your soul and knowing that this is just like an incarnation where you traverse and you leave and you reunite with the divine. Now I'm on the path and I find that being on the path is a daily thing. It's like you never arrive.

Mark: You don't arrive. Right?

Agapi: You don't arrive. I don't know about you, but I definitely deal with fear of dying. I don't know. You and I talked about that. Remember?

Mark: Yes.

Agapi: I remember over lunch, you said to me, "Why don't you just write down all your fears and see what's there?" And I still haven't written them down.

[laughter]

Agapi: I deal with my fear of dissolving, of not existing as me. How do you deal with that?

Mark: I've been doing it for many, many years, and it's a long process. It wears you down after a while. [chuckles] Most of my life, I've been dealing with this. Since I was 29 years old and I had a diagnosis that was supposed to kill me. More than half of my life, I've expected to go or to get ill. What it does, you can't stay panicked forever. The one thing I learned is that panic has a shelf life, you can only stay in that terror for so long, and then you have to figure out how to get through it. I've been very practical about that. It's a long process, but now at my advanced stage, I realize it just wears down.

After a while, you just get more comfortable with the idea that this is not what you are. You live with fragility and vulnerability and feeling ephemeral for long enough and your body starts to believe it. I'm very comfortable with it. Look, I don't want to go tomorrow, but you get very, very familiar with it. Like with any fear, the closer you get to it, the less power it has over you.

Agapi: Well, exactly. I think from my enlightened friends who talk about this death thing, and I watched both my parents take their last breaths. I was there with both of them and I felt the spirit move them out of the body. It was so apparent and I felt their presence after they moved that there was a presence there. Then you go through the grief, and you go through the loss and the missing. For me, Mark, the whole thing of the humanness and the divine and the transitions and how to live in this world as a conscious, loving human being is a puzzle.

Mark: It is.

Agapi: I think anybody who stands up and says, "I've figured it out." I say, [laughs]

Mark: Go in the other direction. Anyone who tells you they have it figured out.

Agapi: I think the figuring it out is to find the surrendering it all. The surrender in it all is what brings you peace, and not knowing. How to deal with your daily life as a loving, conscious, aware, human being. I feel for me, when I'm able to say, honestly, and authentically and not to do a spiritual bypass – I know I've written a book about prayer. I've written a book about joy, I've written about the open heart, so I shouldn't be feeling this. When you are in the midst of your feelings, and that's why I wrote this book, every subject is about disappointment, discouragement, fear. How to love yourself more, how to love each other, how to pray for each other, how to go beyond time.

It's more like how to take this level of materiality, physicality, and constriction, and contraction, and in the midst of that, how do you expand and let go? And you have a good

time and you have joy and you say, “Oh, this is wonderful. I get an opportunity to love, and I get an opportunity to let go and to be free of another pattern. I get to help someone else open up and see the light.” Isn’t that-- [crosstalk]

Mark: It’s grounded in an awareness of your humanity. That’s what I love about your work. It doesn’t just start to take off and forget the body and forget pain, and forget –

Agapi: The emotion and the pain.

Mark: You’re very embodied and that passion comes into your spiritual teaching, which is what to me, gives it ground.

Agapi: Juice.

Mark: Yes, and juice.

Agapi: It’s juicy and we are physical, touchy, feeling beings. We need to be touched, we need to be felt, we need to be seen, and to be seen on every level.

Mark: Yes. That’s an important point because a lot of people come into spiritual life thinking, “Oh, this is going to make my pain go away.”

[laughter]

Mark: Then get that just the opposite happens. You get more aware of your feelings, you get more aware of your connections and your longings and your grief. It’s about how it helps you alchemize it, it helps you to transform it.

Agapi: That’s so beautiful.

Mark: I’m curious. [crosstalk] Sorry.

Agapi: How in sharing it, oh my God, you become so much more compassionate to yourself and each other. I believe so much that we can bring so much comfort to each other. We can bring so much comfort, but I do have to say for me, one of my greatest lessons in my life and right now, and I don’t know how many of you relate, is not to try to save other people. If I see somebody unhappy or sad or going through a hard time, I want to dive right in there and say, “Oh, I can lift them. Oh, I can make them happy.” That’s my child’s self from wanting to make my parents happy.

Mark: Right. Make them happy, save them so that they can love you so they can take care of you.

Agapi: So my world can be safe.

Mark: Exactly. Exactly.

Agapi: I can be in a safe world. I think that’s a pattern for me that I’m working on. I see somebody and I go, “Send them light.” You don’t know what they’re working through. That’s their karma.

Mark: That’s right. You know who Stephen Levine was? He was a great, great teacher.

Agapi: Oh, my God, yes. He still is.

Mark: Sorry?

Agapi: He still is.

Mark: No, he is gone. He's been dead for years.

Agapi: Oh, he has been dead. Okay.

Mark: Yes, he's gone. Stephen Levine told this wonderful story about being in a hospital and there was a dying baby and he was sitting and praying for the baby to get better and for the pain to be taken away, and suddenly he got this message: that's the wrong prayer. The prayer is let this baby and let these parents learn what they need to learn through this experience. It's a mistake in prayer to try to save people.

Agapi: Also, it's like as if God says, "Get out of my way, I know what I'm doing." I remember once I was living with a couple and they were always fighting, there was a girlfriend and her boyfriend. I said to my spiritual teacher, I said, "It's so hard to watch them fight. They're always fighting." He says, "How do you know this is not their way of loving each other? Get out the way."

I was feeling so bad for them, and he just said to me, "Get out of the way." I just have to say this is one of my biggest lessons too. There's this great story that I have in the book of a monk who is in a monastery retreat. He's praying to God. He says, "God, what can I do to serve you more?" Because he really so loves God. He hears his inner voice say, "Shut up, and let me love you."

Mark: [laughs] That's good. Shut up and get out of the way.

Agapi: Get out, and let me love you. I just love that because for me it's like, "Agapi, you are fine the way you are, and you are loved and get out of your own way so you may know God's love for me." If you say to me, "What do you want more than anything?" It is to walk on this earth with my fullness. We all have this place of lack when we don't feel we're good enough, or we don't feel we're important enough, or we feel the ego struggles, and we're not appreciated enough. Whatever it is, I don't know what else there is Mark, but you know what I'm talking about. Then you empty your cup, and you walk around wanting others in the world to fill it up.

It's painful to come from that void, the void, the emptiness. For me, when I'm in my fullness, and often when I speak, or when I do my events, when I speak to groups of people, I always feel the fullness. The struggle of the pandemic is there was no one there to speak to other than my family and FaceTime and Zooms, but there wasn't this amazing energy that I've had with people. I felt bereft. I had to go very deep inside to say, "You could sit here in a corner for the rest of your life and be in the kingdom of heaven." You could Agapi. You could Mark. You could sit here and the kingdom of heaven is within is that phrase.

When you close your eyes and you pray, and you feel the veil lifts, and you're right there, all the religions have said the kingdom of heaven is within in one way or another. That's why children know that, because the veil hasn't shifted, it has fallen. It's more like, how do you lift the veil? You need to come back to prayer. Prayer is lifting the veil. Prayer is like going, "Okay, I take the veil, I pray, I lift my veil, and I let the spirit usher me."

Mark: Beautiful. It's really beautifully said. I wanted to ask you about faith because many people don't have faith. Do you think it's possible to pray and to benefit from prayer if you don't believe in a God?

Agapi: Yes, I really do. I feel one of the reasons I wrote this book, is because originally I felt it was a non-denomination, it was for the people who don't believe, the people who don't have faith. Again, I have an example in the book, in the preface, where I say, there's a girl who was at a dinner party at our home, was at dinner. She was let go from a job, her partner had left, and she was alone in her 40s. Her mother was sick, and she was going through a very, very hard time. My sister said to me, "Why don't you talk to Jennifer, whatever her name was, and help her." I said to her, "Do you pray?" She said, "Who would I pray to?" That's such a question that people ask.

I said, "Let's pray to your 36 trillion cells who are making you right now that are miraculous." She said, "I never thought about it." I said, "Let's pray to the one who's breathing you, and let's ask for that energy that's in you, that is for you." We did a prayer and she started to cry. It's really remarkable because this woman, I don't know your kind of God, did we plant the seed then? Something came in that opened her up and she started to create a life she loves. She's created work she loves. She's created a relationship. Her mother passed on. I look at her now, three years later, she has an amazing life contributing. Talk about hope, and talk about don't believing.

It's like, don't worry if you don't believe, don't worry if you don't have faith. Don't worry if people don't have faith, pray for them anyways. Pray with them, because we are healers. The healing energy in us is so powerful. If you hold somebody's hands with your heart and your love, that is prayer; you don't have to have been anointed by Archangel Michael saying, "You have the charge to now –" No, just pray. If you have a little bit of awareness, pray for someone else who does is none. That's the generosity of the spirit. I encourage people so much to pray at dinners, to pray before meetings, to just ask for the divine. Can we pray right now?

Mark: Sure, yes.

Agapi: This is Mark and Agapi and we ask for our heart for the spirit of love, the spirit of peace, the spirit of kindness, the spirit of generosity, to come and flood us and to flood this community and whoever is listening to this moment to receive the blessing and the benediction of love, of peace, of forgiveness, and to open up the gates inside to hear their spirit speak to them and offer guidance, inspiration, and upliftment.

We ask that the spirit right now be amplified and charged so that this energy of love and the high consciousness be transmuted through us. We usher ourselves to the rest of the day with the vibration of the light, lifting anything that we don't need, clearing any cobwebs in our consciousness. Let us become the light-bearers to the best of our ability. We thank you, and we love you. We thank you [silence]. So be it.

Mark: Beautiful. Thank you so much. That is such a beautiful way to end our conversation. I'm so grateful to you. Thank you, and for the work you do. You're such a bright light, Agapi.

Agapi: Oh my God, Mark, thank you so much. I see so much kindness in your face and in your eyes and your smile. You have so much joy right now. I just see that and I'm drinking it

myself. Thank you for your honoring me. Thank you to this community. Here's the book which is ready to be ordered, here we go. These are the galleys.

Mark: Fantastic.

Agapi: It's out. Please get a copy and pass it on and read these prayers out loud. I do. Write your own prayers and share them. Write prayers for other people. What a great gift on people's birthday to say, "I will write your blessing." Write your prayers. I'm actually going to start a little movement in my Instagram to say to people "Tell me what is prayer for you?" What people say, "When was the first time you knew God, when you knew that you're not alone. You felt that higher power." Just really start this movement where everybody says, "Yes, I don't go to church, I don't have a faith as such. I remember when I was walking at the lake, I saw the dead bird, I felt a loving hand." Because we all are connected, end of story. We are connected. It's just we have to keep igniting it, turn on the engine.

Mark: Keep remembering.

Agapi: Keep remembering. Actually, I just thought of that. Prayer is turning on the key and the ignition. You know Mark what I call it? Prayer is the password for your inner Wi-Fi.

Mark: [laughs] That's good.

Agapi: Your inner Wi-Fi.

Mark: Can I just ask you one more question?

Agapi: Yes, anything.

Mark: How do you think your background as an actress prepared you for the work that you do today?

Agapi: I think for me the acting was a way of taking my expression and connecting. Acting is all about projecting. They're all being on the stage and being on the stage is where I came in to bring that other message, the message of the heart and the love. I was always comfortable on the stage only. There's a friend of mine who said, "You were not meant to be on the Broadway stage, you were meant to be on the world stage." Instead of doing the role of Clytemnestra, or Elexer or Antigone, you were to do Agapi, 100% Agapi. That was my learning that, "Can I be okay just being myself and sharing who I am?" That's been my path.

Because of the acting, I'm very comfortable in sharing. I'm very comfortable in putting it all out there and being in front of an audience and being in front of people. I'm as comfortable as I am with one person. I've been on the stage with thousands of people and I'm so comfortable and that's again, what I so missed in the pandemic. I missed the audience. Then I had to realize that I have this energy and this expression, and everything can become when I'm by myself.

Mark: This book wouldn't have happened in any other way.

Agapi: It wouldn't have happened. No. It would not have happened. Every prayer was written out of that asking and the longing and overcoming the pain, overcoming the difficulty. Like always, we celebrate those difficult moments.

Mark: The ones we would want to avoid are so often the ones that give us the most.

Agapi: Isn't that amazing? So many people that went through and still are going through so much, so your loving and your compassion is so needed out there.

Mark: Your book is so needed out there. I want to encourage everyone to order the book. It comes out in January, and I wish –

Agapi: January 11th.

Mark: January 11.

Agapi: 2022. Is that amazing?

Mark: Yes.

Agapi: I want to give everybody also my email, which is agapi@unbindingtheheart.com. If you send me an e-mail agapi@unbindingtheheart.com, I will send you some of my guided meditations that I've done that are really beautiful.

Mark: Oh, that's great. I'll post that with the interview.

Agapi: Great. You know my website, Wake Up to the Joy of You and my Instagram and everything and people can follow. Let us stay connected and stay lifting each other up.

Mark: Yes, my dear. Absolutely.

Agapi: So much my dear, Mark. Thank you. I can't wait to see you for dinner one night here.

Mark: Let's see each other soon.

Agapi: Very soon. God bless. Thank you, and thank you to everybody. Thank you. See you all very soon.

Mark: Thank you, darling. Bye.

Agapi: Bye, darling.