

UNITY ON MAUI | WALK YOUR TALK
The Gift You Didn't Order
Sunday, May 17, 2026

The difficulty that arrives in your life — the thing you didn't order — is watercolor. It is going somewhere. And it may be making something more beautiful than anything you would have planned.

THE GIFT I DIDN'T ORDER

I want to begin with Emily. Emily was my partner and a watercolor artist. She painted waterfalls and beach scenes — the places where water meets land, where something is always arriving and always leaving. And then she died. I did not order that gift. I would give it back tomorrow if I could.

But her death opened something in me I could not have received any other way. It made me more present to the people still here, more willing to say the truth while there is still time. It opened a tenderness in me that I did not have before. I hold the people I love more dearly now — more in the specific, irreplaceable, unrepeatable now of who they are. I did not order that. And it has transformed my life.

WATERCOLOR — AND THE WATER IN MOTION

Emily worked in watercolor. And watercolor does not obey. You lay it down and it flows where it wants to go — bleeding into places you didn't plan, finding its own edges, creating effects no amount of intention could engineer. A beginning artist fights this. A master learns to stay open to what the medium is doing, trusting that what is happening on the paper, even when it doesn't look like the plan, is working toward something.

Emily painted waterfalls — thresholds, the exact moment where the controlled meets the uncontrolled. She painted water *in motion* over and over because she knew: what appears to be going out of control is actually going somewhere. What bleeds beyond the edge of the plan is not a mistake. The water does not wander. It finds its way.

DR. JOHN DEMARTINI — THE COLLAPSE PROCESS

Dr. John DeMartini's life work rests on one radical premise: the universe is always in perfect balance — not eventually, but now, in the same event. Every experience we label as negative contains an equal and opposite benefit, hidden because we are looking at only one side. His Collapse Process asks: for every loss, where is the hidden gain? For every door that closed, what room was it keeping you from? ***"We do not grieve events — we grieve our one-sided perception of events."*** When both sides become visible, grief transforms into awe.

FOUR PATHS TO THE SAME RECOGNITION

Every major spiritual tradition arrived at this understanding through its own language.

Rumi & the Sufis: "The wound is the place where the light enters you." The Sufi tradition teaches that *the breaking of the heart is not the destruction of love — it is the expansion of the vessel that holds it*. Rumi's grief at losing his teacher Shams produced the *Masnavi*, one of the greatest spiritual masterworks ever written. The loss was the gift.

Buddhism — The Second Arrow: Pain is inevitable, but suffering is the second arrow — the story we tell about the event, the resistance, the rehearsal of what should have been different. The second arrow is always optional. DeMartini's Collapse Process is, at its core, the systematic removal of the second arrow.

The Stoics — Amor Fati: The love of fate. Not resignation, but active embrace. The obstacle is the material. The difficulty is the medium. The uninvited arrival is the pigment that makes the painting possible.

Julian of Norwich: Receiving her visions during a severe illness, she arrived at the most audacious claim in the English mystical tradition: "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." Not because nothing bad happens. But because nothing is wasted.

POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

Psychologists Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun documented what they called Post-Traumatic Growth: people who moved *through* significant crisis consistently emerged with greater personal strength, deeper relationships, more meaningful purpose, and a profound appreciation for life that had not existed before. The growth is not *despite* the difficulty — it is *because* of it. Crisis forces a rebuilding, and what gets rebuilt is often more integrated and more compassionate than what existed before.

HOLDING TWO TRUTHS SIMULTANEOUSLY

Transformation comes not from resolving the tension, but from holding both truths at once: *This is hard, AND something good is at work here*. The I AM is not frightened by what the human self is frightened by. The I AM already sees the painting the human eye cannot yet see.

A REFLECTION MOMENT

Think of one thing in your life that arrived uninvited — something you resisted, grieved, tried to undo. You did not order it. Let it come to mind without forcing or fixing it. Notice what your body holds when you think of it. Then write — not to explain or resolve, but simply to name what is present.

What arrived that I didn't order — and what has it been making in me?

QUESTION ONE

What was a gift I received that I didn't order — and what did it make possible in me that nothing else could have?

Move from naming the uninvited arrival to tracing what it actually built: the quality, the capacity, the tenderness that could only have come through that specific door. Some gifts take years to unwrap. The willingness to ask is the beginning.

QUESTION TWO

Who did I become because of the thing I most wanted to undo — and would I trade that person away to have the original order filled?

This is the harder question. It does not demand a comfortable answer. It asks for an honest one.

QUESTION THREE

Where in my life right now is the watercolor going somewhere I didn't plan — and can I stay open long enough to see what it is making?

This question lives in the present tense — not a resolved past gift, but a current unfolding. The willingness to ask before the painting is finished is the most alive practice of all.

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE**THE FULL PAINTING INQUIRY**

Choose one difficult experience, past or present. This is a rigorous, honest inquiry of holding two truths simultaneously, and not a spiritual bypass. Spend ten minutes writing both sides of each truth. For instance: **For every perceived loss:** where is the hidden gain? **For every door that closed:** what room was it keeping you from? **For every person who withdrew,** who showed up?

The act of writing slows thought enough to see what thought-speed misses. You do not need to arrive at a resolution. The willingness to look at the full painting is the practice.

"What if the gift you didn't want is the thing that made you who you are?"

Emily painted the threshold — where the controlled meets the uncontrolled. She knew that what bleeds beyond the edge of the plan is not a mistake. You are in the middle of a painting right now. The watercolor is not out of control. It never was.

THIS WEEK'S AFFIRMATION

***I am open to the gift I did not order.
I trust the wisdom working in what I cannot yet see.***

A BLESSING FOR THE WEEK

May you find, in the difficulty you did not choose, the gift you did not know you needed. May you have the courage to look at the full painting — not just the part that went according to plan, but the whole of what is on the paper. May you discover that the color went somewhere, that nothing has been wasted, and that all of it — the losses, the uninvited arrivals, the grief — has been working. All of it watercolor. All of it a gift.