



The Energy of Being Real, by Mark Nepo

"Mana" is a term originally used in a Polynesian and Melanesian cultures to describe an extraordinary power or force residing in a person or an object, a sort of spiritual electricity that charges anyone who touches it. Carl Jung later defined the term as "the unconscious influence of one being on another." What Jung speaks to is the fact that the energy of being real has more power than outright persuasion, debate, or force of will. He suggests that being who we are always release an extraordinary power that, without intent or design, affects the people who come in contact with such realness. The beautiful and simple truth of this can be seen in looking at the sun. The sun, without intent or will or plan or sense of principle, just shines, thoroughly and constantly. By being itself, the sun warms with its light, never withholding or warming only certain things of the Earth. Rather, the sun emanates in all directions all the time, and things grow. In the same way, when we are authentic, expressing our warmth and light in all directions, we cause things around us to grow. When our souls like little suns express the light of who we are, we emanate what Jesus called love and what Buddha called compassion, and the roots of community lengthen. In this way, without any intent to shape others, we simply have to be authentic, and a sense of mana, of spiritual light and warmth will emanate from our very souls, causing others to grow -- not towards us, but towards the light that moves through us. In this way, by being who we are, we not only experience life in all its vitality, but quite innocently and without design, we help others be more thoroughly themselves. In being real, in staying devoted to this energy of realness, we help each other grow toward the one vital light. --Mark Nepo