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That's the Spirit

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That's the Spirit

When youngsters get up after a fall, or act with generosity, they might be told, "That's the spirit." We have in that expression of a small number of words a useful means of communicating significant encouragement. Perhaps these same words might be meaningful for us in our own situations this very day.

When we say "**the** spirit" we have a limited and positive focus in mind. We do not mean just any kind of spirit, which might include a spirit of pride or a spirit of competition, but only that spirit which encourages, supports, inspires and guides us to the fulfillment of our calling in life. Implicitly, we refer to the spirit that is operative in all of us when we think, speak or act in a manner that elicits heartfelt approval. And the approval we give to others, or even experience within our own minds and hearts, arises from our resonance with that very spirit within us.

We do not have to have a clear, agreed-upon definition of spirits for us to recognize what kind of behavior is positively inspired and which is not. None of us would deliberately seek to be moved, advised, guided or in any way affected by mean-spirited persons. However, with the help of some honest reflection, we might find that our minds can at times furnish us with negative thoughts and interior expressions that could, unchecked, diminish our basically good intentions. By saying "that's the spirit," when we are truly pleased with what we observe, we distinguish it from the influences of other spirits, where the results of our accepting their guidance are not so agreeable. Recognizing the different movements within us enables us to make better decisions.

We have a built-in honesty detector that requires no batteries or Wi-Fi connections. When we listen carefully, we can recognize the usually quiet thoughts and inner words that represent the better options that are available to us at the time. The more we consciously seek to identify and accept every good line of thinking that comes to us, the more proficient we become at being able to honestly say, "that's the spirit:" the spirit of truth, of personal integrity and ultimately, of love.

Just as most of us are not coerced into taking walks or otherwise obtaining some physical exercise, no one is going to force us to regularly reflect on the different movements of the spirits that can be recognized in our everyday thoughts and impulses. But again, just like those who pass through an initial challenge before finding for themselves the benefits of physical exercise, those who make a consistent effort to monitor the activity of their personal honesty detector will be pleased with the practical results. Those who find

that they recognize for themselves the spirit of life and love will be able more frequently to say "yes" to such inspirations, and "no" to some of the other suggestions, impulses and doubts that can enter our minds.

That's the Spirit.