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## Who Did It?

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## Who Did It?

Those who enjoy detective stories like to think about who might be the perpetrator of the crime. When we reflect on our experiences of inspired thought and action, we might enjoy considering who is involved in the ongoing mystery of our lived spirituality.

Rather than finding and naming one person as the sole agent of each of our acts of kindness, we might discover that two or even several persons have had a significant part in our individual actions. On one occasion, perhaps we were asked by someone to help solve a problem that he or she could not unravel alone, and we participated in a solution. Reflecting further, we might recognize one or two interior movements prior to our own action: perhaps a surprising impulse to say "yes" to the request, when our thinking process suggested that we would not be able to help with that particular difficulty. We might also, as we became involved with the situation, have received an inspired thought that provided us with a key to resolving the challenge. Although we were solely responsible for our choices, we did not act in a completely autonomous fashion.

When our decision-making is conscious, we are engaged in a spiritual activity that always involves others in some way. Our essential freedom is not impeded by the reality of the many influences upon us, from memories of the past, to interactions in the present. Even when God gives us inspired thoughts, we are free to act as we choose. We do not even have to acknowledge that we receive inspirations. But there are distinct advantages for us in reflecting upon our experiences and noting the help we have received from God, from our own memories of prior thoughts and actions and from the many people with whom we related directly and indirectly. We were able, with the help of all these others, to make choices that surely contributed positively to the human environment in which we live, and benefited ourselves as well.

One perhaps surprising consequence of reflecting on who has been a part of our own good actions is that our capacity for gratitude expands greatly. When we are willing to acknowledge some of the specific positive influences of others on our behavior, we become grateful for them, but we also become more capable of recognizing and properly rejoicing in the essential contribution we made, and for which we are solely responsible. By exercising our freedom to choose not only our own thoughts, words and actions that we recognize as being good, but also to accept all that we receive from others, we have increased our causes for gratitude.

When we are able to gracefully admit the help we receive from God and from others to the point of believing that we “could not have done it without them,” we are also in the position of honestly being pleased and grateful that if we had not spoken or acted as we did, it would not have occurred at all.

“Who did it?” In a spiritual context, answering the question with honest reflection leads us into the mystery of gratitude for the gift and awesome responsibility of free will which we exercise within a community that is both human and divine.

Randy