

## Virtues: Fibers of Our Being

For years, I searched for a way to explain why being a kindred spirit requires so much personal work. The answer, in a metaphor, was under my feet the entire time. Maggie inherited a gorgeous Persian rug from her grandparents, who were importers. The rug was hand-made in the province of Tabriz, Iran, in the early 1900s. A Persian family raised the sheep, carded the wool into yarn, collected the natural ingredients for dyeing, created a design and wove the rug.

I once had the opportunity to card raw wool into parallel fibers, and using a spinning wheel, convert the fibers to thread. It was a demanding task, but gave me immense satisfaction in its accomplishment. This gave me a sense of the skill and dedication necessary to make a beautiful rug. It is a form of mastery.

Virtues are like a fine, hand-made carpet. The fibers represent the qualities of one's character. To form one virtue takes thousands of fibers (intentions and actions) twisted together. Each length of yarn is colored by one's personality and unique vibration. The texture is determined by the individual's growth and life experiences.

There is pleasure and art in the process of weaving our lives together; in and out, up and down, shuttling back and forth, give and take, push and pull ... all taking practice and patience. The threads that run crosswise represent one person, while the lengthwise threads symbolize the other partner in the relationship. There is a different design for each relationship we create. Some are simple weaves, others are more elaborate. The dynamic tension between them represents respect for our variations. The blending of two people from opposite directions necessitates great flexibility. As the multicolored strands interlace, a pattern forms. The character of the two people imparts a "feel" to the fabric. Deep levels of intimacy are possible when we have created the threads of virtues and woven them into an intricate friendship.

Kindred spirits are the artistic expression of our love.

The fabric of relationships needs to be treated with care. Even one thread missing can weaken the fabric, causing the relationship to unravel. Like all things over time, there will be natural wear and tear, so both people are responsible for maintaining the vitality of the friendship. Each friendship is a rare work of art that adds warmth, beauty and comfort to our lives.