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THE CALLING OF MORE,
MISUNDERSTOOD AND
WEAPONIZED

WHEN A SACRED LONGING.
IS TWISTED BY THE WORLD.



Part 4: The Calling of More

Misunderstood and Weaponized

My name is Carlo.

I used to be Carl; that was the name I was given at birth, named after Dr. Carl Joseph Champagne, the physician who delivered me prematurely into this world. Looking back, it seems I was in a hurry, even then, for more. From the very beginning I was the fixer, a doer, the one who held things together. Something changed at 19 years of age, I discovered the Source of Love that lived in me, it transformed the way I looked at everything, including myself. It was as if the Spirit whispered: "that old name" Carl" bore the burden; this one will carry the calling, your name is Carlo", a name reflecting tenderness, openness, and a little more breath in it. That's what faith gave me: more breath, more space, more awareness.

Many years would pass, my pursuit of more motivated me to pursue education, which led me to imbibe in the study of the faith through theological studies. Those who have pursued this course of study become aware too soon that whatever "brand" of religious training you pursue, this "brand" will indoctrinate you into its way of believing - not necessarily "the correct Way," just "a" way. I dare say, the study of religion is a double-edged sword that can contribute to a mentality of segregation, self-imposed piety, division, judgementalism, even arrogance. I would ultimately discover that *loving my Creator, loving myself and loving others would be the fundamental foundation for all that I would embrace in my life.* This pursuit of love, and loving others, would accompany me to Mexico, West Africa, South Africa, East Africa and many parts of the United States.

I married at 25 years of age, looking back, I was never ready, but who really is? Part of the reasoning for my choice for marriage was to satisfy the loneliness, and to ensure any unnecessary improprieties. I would certainly not recommend anyone marry for such a reason, it is a poor foundation to build upon. As I mentioned earlier, over three decades would pass before I would realize, "this is not working." Our incompatibility could not be

transformed through wishing, praying, pleading or counseling. Consequently, we chose to do the brave thing, the right thing, move on. We would remain friends, but realized, we were not meant for marriage. Our needs from the very start of our relationship were divergent from the start; no amount of cajoling or mental exercises was going to change that. Each of us had a cry for more that neither one of us could meet, so, we chose to love each other enough to let go.

After my divorce, something unexpected began to rise, not bitterness, not self-pity, not even resignation, but love, more love; not romantic love, but a holy resolve to love deeper, without strategy or scarcity. To give without controlling the outcome; to pour out, even if it left me tired and unappreciated. I began to realize something anew: love is how *more-people* survive; love is how *more-people* live; love is how *more-people* stay awake in a world that keeps trying to lull them to sleep.

*When I faltered, I feared the pavement of judgment.
I braced for the crash, for the shattering.
But instead I was caught by living water,
soft, yielding, yet strong enough to hold me.*

*Water did not erase the fall, it received it.
It took the violence of the impact
and dispersed it into ripples.*

*That is what Love does.
It cushions without smothering.
It carries without clinging.
It bears weight without breaking.*

*In water, my heaviness is lifted.
I float, not because I am weightless,
but because the Water is faithful.*

*And I hear the invitation:
Stop thrashing.
Stop fearing the fall.
Let yourself be held
by the One who absorbs, carries,
and makes even your breaking gentle.*

I love loving people, I don't say that for applause, I say it because it's the purest truth I know. I love looking into someone's eyes and saying without words: "You are NOT a problem," "you are NOT a burden," "you are NOT too much," "you ARE worth every ounce of attention I must give."

Sometimes, people tell me it sounds exhausting, it can be, but it's also the most life-giving thing I've ever done. I've spent hours sitting beside people in their grief, in hospice, in addiction, in traumas, in loss and I don't rush them. I don't try to fix them; I just stay. Because that's what "more" people long for, more than anything, someone who stays. That's what I wanted as a child, what I still want as a man. I've learned that sometimes the greatest calling in life is simply this, *to be the person you needed when you were young*. So, I show up; I listen; I choose love, I choose more. Not because I'm trying to earn anything, but because I finally believe I am something: I am love; I am enough, and I am more.

I want to share with you something very personal: the day I had a dream: A young woman's face, framed in stillness, her eyes steady, unblinking. They held a piercing love I could not name. No smile, no words, only presence. It overwhelmed me so deeply that in the dream I felt tears rise. I remember whispering, "but God, I'm married." Then, "she's so young," and I woke. That morning, I called my wife into the room. We had been married more than thirty years — years that began with unmet expectations and a slow, steady ache that no amount of cajoling or counseling could heal. "If it's a friend you want," I told her, "I'll always be your friend. But if you can't love me because you want to — not because you must — you need to let me go." She chose to let me go, a decision we both recognized as holy and necessary if we were truly honest with one another.

I soon moved into my own apartment. For a year and a half, I was single, working with adolescents in a psychiatric hospital. When I began dating, the first attempt was a disaster; the second, equally incompatible. I then prayed a very specific prayer: *"God, bring me someone who loves You, someone whose words carry the ring of truth—even if they are blunt, even if they cut against pretense."* In those days of hurt and healing, I longed for someone unpolished by religious pretense, someone real. And now, with time, I see how necessary that longing was—for sometimes the holiest voices are not the polished ones, but the honest ones shaped by divine love.

Then one day on Facebook, I noticed her. Her name felt familiar. We liked each other's posts. I sent a message, cautious, not to sound like I was flirting: "I know this sounds like a pickup line, but I don't mean it that way. Your name seems familiar. Do I know you?" Her reply: "Yes, of course. LOL. You were my youth pastor when I was 13." Thirty-five plus years had passed; I didn't remember her, not until she showed me a picture from those years. More than three decades had passed since we'd crossed paths. It was as if God had reached back to the very place, the place I'd first lost my footing in life and then divinely placed in my hands the gift, a gift I didn't know I was waiting for all along, like Abraham, and the ram in the thicket. We talked for hours. Amy shared her story, an abusive marriage, a heart that loved too much for some to understand. Amy had been told she would never find someone who could love her the way she needed. When she said that, I knew. I had just met someone who understood more.

The first time we met in person, I stepped within two feet of her, and the realization hit me like lightning — this was the face from my dream. My dream girl. Amy. From the first day on the phone, I fell in love with her, and in the five years we have been together, I have fallen in love with her every morning, every afternoon, every evening.

She is strong, tender, and real; she has endured loss and still loves with abandon. She calls me to my best self, and she says I have brought out the best in her. We are more people, two souls who know that love, when it is honest and whole, is worth waiting a lifetime for.

*She was laughter after long silence,
truth after half-spoken prayers.*

*Her eyes had visited me once,
in the stillness of a dream,
before I knew her name,
before I knew what I was missing.*

*She had walked through fire—
loss, betrayal, the kind of pain that teaches the soul
to keep both sword and shield nearby.*

And yet,

*when loved in the way her heart deserved,
she bloomed.*

*She loved God, loved others,
and told the truth without apology.*

*She loved me, the real me,
not the version I thought I had to be.*

*We are two more people,
finding that when two longings meet,
the whole becomes a kind of holy.*

The world does not know what to do with people who want more, it's easier to label them, quieter to dismiss them, safer to box them up and shove them to the margins. But "more", when denied, distorted, or demonized, doesn't go away, it adapts, it learns to hide or to fight: to fight, flight or freeze.

The "more-child" misdiagnosed becomes the "troubled teen." The aching adolescent becomes the "problem adult." The girl who once reached for affection now holds back everything. The boy who cried for attention now pretends not to care, *but the longing never left, it just put on different clothes.*

Society gets uncomfortable with neediness, so, it rewrites it as pathology. We say: "she's too emotional," "he just wants attention," "they're manipulative." It's time to abolish these negative pronouncements from our vocabularies'. We whisper these judgments behind office doors, pulpits, podiums, platforms, and clinical charts, but all the while, we are naming what we fear in ourselves, the deep, aching-vulnerability of being human.

What's more threatening than someone who feels everything? Who refuses to settle? Who dares to say: *This isn't enough?* We tend to punish "more" when it threatens our systems, but *systems were never meant to replace souls, they were meant to serve them. Institutions become cruel when they forget to serve the sacred.* When a child's cry for love is met with cold bureaucracy, what are we teaching them about a loving Creator? About life? About themselves?

Sometimes I think the world would rather numb children than listen to them, medicate them instead of mentor them, silence them instead of soothing them. *Behavior management without heart connection is just damage control in disguise.*

It's why I say again: More is not a diagnosis, it's a gift, but it must be nurtured, not manipulated. In contrast, unchecked, "more" can run wild, it can morph into addiction, obsession, or self-destruction: Lust posing as love; Greed masquerading as ambition. We've all seen what happens when "more" is severed from love, it burns down everything in sight, but when "more" is held in the arms of compassion, when it is taught to breathe, to trust, to serve, it becomes firelight instead of wildfire.

There is risk in "more." But there is far greater risk in silencing it. We *must become guardians of the flame, not firefighters.* We must listen more and label less; we must see people not as diagnoses, but as sacred stories.

One such sacred story is the story of a 13-year-old boy named Brandon. Brandon was a "gift" I had the privilege of being a caretaker of. Brandon had made a plethora of destructive choices that resulted in him being placed in a psychiatric hospital for his protection. This day I had the privilege of sharing on the topic of forgiveness; I began by requesting that each child write a "forgiveness letter." I deliberately chose to be vague as to my expectations, so that my audience would take whatever liberties they could personally imagine and manifest them with words on paper. My goal was to assist each child to understand the baggage each of us carry when we choose to limit ourselves through unforgiveness, whether that be towards God (if one believed in God), or unforgiveness of others resulting in resentment, physical and/or emotional pain. Also, my goal was to remind my listeners that forgiveness does not mean that we provide a pardon, a hall pass, or a get-out-of-jail-card, for those who have wronged us. Forgiveness does not require we invite the offender back into our lives. We also discussed the boundaries necessary for forgiveness to be comprehended, apprehended and valued. Out of all the children who attended this meeting that day, Brandon was the one who protested the loudest, stating, "I can't do this". I continued to patiently request his cooperation, which resulted in this letter:

“Dear Trust, Over the years, we both have been clashing in a long, painful, burdensome self-destruction. We have gone to the end of our road and back in constant battle with each other, starting with bullies in 2nd grade, the first mistake I ever made, and going all the way to now, where I’ve completely lost you. Trust, you are like a piece of paper. You can fold it and ball it up, but when you are unfolded and smoothed out, you are never the same. I forgive you for collapsing and disappearing into a pile of dust, and I have yet to forgive myself for causing that. I hope to build strong bridges out of you again. Brandon”

That letter shook me; Brandon’s approach to speak to “Trust” was so creative, so empathic, so brilliant. I responded to Brandon, “Please don’t ever tell me again that you can’t do anything. This writing is brilliant, it’s genius; I’m moved by this. There’s only one problem...” Brandon responded, “What’s the problem?” I continued, “This is amazing, but it’s not finished, do you notice the phrase, ‘I have yet to forgive myself for causing that?’” I handed Brandon another piece of paper, and without complaint he continued to write, this is what he wrote:

“Dear Addiction, you took trust in your grasp and crushed it. You’ve taken over my mind and hypnotized me into loving you, blinding me to your evil self. You are comforting in the moment when you are used, but you are hurting my health, brain and most of all, Trust. However, I must bring myself to forgive you. You are the shittiest thing to ever come into my life, but I’m the one who let you take control, and now, I am sending you away. I will no longer give in to your wrath. You can lurk in my mind and urge me to come back to you all you want, but you destroy me and other people who are close to me. Now that I think about it, you are not just addiction or actions, you are me! You were created by me and now I can’t get you out of my head. So no, I do not forgive you Addiction, because that demon does not exist. I forgive myself for putting that pressure on me and creating that brain-washing demon inside of me. I created it to be evil and doing that was horrible for me, and that consequence is the demon inside of me. I forgive myself for making me my own enemy. Brandon”

I’m certain if you read this you were moved. How does a 13-year-old write such a masterpiece of self-reflection? How? Because Brandon was a “more” child, a developing “more” man, with a bright future ahead of him, a future dependent on patience, instruction, guidance and encouragement.

Brandon's future was hanging in the balance. Brandon needed to be reminded of WHO he is: "more". I had the privilege of seeing Brandon a few years later, puberty had emerged, and Brandon's voice was significantly deeper, and his height was towering over me. Brandon had returned to the hospital to have his medications adjusted. I recognized him immediately. Brandon greeted me and apologized for returning to the hospital. Brandon thought that his return to the hospital may in some way be disappointing. I very quickly responded with enthusiasm for seeing him. Brandon avoided eye contact, a familiar shame that many children reflected when feeling inadequate or feeling they have disappointed someone. I encouraged Brandon, "it's always my privilege to see you, and to witness your continued growth, you're not where you used to be, and you're not where you're going to be, but you're certainly not where you were. Brandon, you're a work in progress, like me." I then asked Brandon, "how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Step by step, one bite at a time you're going to win." I continued, "Brandon, if you saw me in the community at the gas station, standing next to my car kicking it, what would you do?" Brandon said, "I'd ask you 'what's wrong Mr. Carlo?'" I responded, "what if my response was, 'I'm out of gas', what would you say?" Brandon stated, "Mr. Carlo, do you need any gas money?" I continued, "what if I said, 'No, Brandon, I don't need gas money, I'm tired of putting gas in this car, if I put gas in it, it will just empty again.'" Brandon said, "well, Mr. Carlo, if you want to drive your car, you've got to put gas in it". I responded, "That's right Brandon, the same applies to you, you are here at the hospital, to simply top off your gas, fill your tank, and get back on the road. If you're ever short of gas, let me know, I am always here to assist you on your journey."

To want more is not a crime; to ask for more is not rebellion, it is the soul remembering something true: *I was made for more.*

*To the one renamed, reclaimed, reborn.
May your ache be honored, not pathologized.
May your love pour without measure and still never run dry.
May your more be held gently by those who see,
and fiercely by the One who made you.
You are not too much. You are just in time.
And the world needs exactly the soul you carry.*

Reader Reflection:

Have I ever shrunk to fit a space that couldn't hold my more?

What are my concerns regarding "more?"

What would it mean to stop apologizing and start embracing my fire?

Think about a time you met someone who saw you for who you truly are.

What changed in you when you realized you were safe to be yourself?

What qualities in another person call you toward your best self?

Consider your own "dream people" — those who arrived in your life like answers to prayers you didn't know you had. What does their presence say to you about timing, trust, and divine orchestration?

*Sometimes, love is not found — it is revealed,
as if it had been waiting all along for the moment you were
ready.*