

In my younger years I led groups of preteens and teens in cultural programs that were social in the informality of the setting, outside of a formal classroom. I noticed that these kids had just as much fun in their groups as did those in primarily social and recreational programs. It seemed as though the quality of social interchange was higher in the cultural-based programs because kids learned about each other in deeper ways than was the case in pure recreational contexts.

The purpose of WineSpirit is to turn a social moment into a quality moment of exchange and interchange that goes deeper than the cocktail agenda. That is why whenever we gather for any program or activity, we include some question that links life's enjoyable moments with increased awareness of ongoing shared blessings and specialness happening more often than we realize,

subject only to our noticing them.

We take seriously the spirit and intention behind and within the words we exchange in clinking glasses. We all know “words are cheap”, or more accurately, can be cheapened and rendered “just words”. Say what you will, the act of enjoying wine is among the best opportunities to change direction in terms of how people treat each other and listen to one another. Wine’s origins in religious sanctification and its persistence as the beverage of choice for toasting opens us up to pondering the value and merit of our time together.

It begins with “noticing” our “stopping”, the moments of the pouring and the toast. Then we make a choice: is it a rote clink or a thoughtful heartfelt connect? Is it an automatic action and reaction, or a mindful tuning in to the person(s) and the moment? Left to our own patterns we may do it without thinking. Sharing a WineSpirit consciousness to seek a connection between wine and “specialness”/“spirituality”, we will do more than a rote clink; we will catch a moment with someone and turn it into a very special experience.

We can play this “game” every time we open a bottle of wine: along with pouring, along with raising the glass, and along with opening mouths to utter a wish, we can load lots of thought and lots of feeling into the utterance. It is an opening to a deeper level of interchange. All we need do is remember to do so. What happens is something special.{jcomments off}