



STANDING *in his* **POWER**

*A "New" Eddie Watkins Jr. Tours America:
Spreading the Love "Like Butta!"*

KENT RAUTENSTRAUS

*We'll be living in heaven here on Earth
And experience life for all it's worth
Talking 'bout the journey deep inside
With infinite Spirit as the guide.*

"Talking About the Journey"

Words and Music by Eddie Watkins Jr.

With only one music job lined up, Eddie Watkins Jr. climbed into his 2002 Ford Explorer, glanced at the odometer's 100,000-plus mileage reading and drove out of Seattle to begin a new life and his "Across America" music tour. It was winter 2011, and the former Motown Records bassist, singer and arranger had recently ended his marriage and resigned as music director of the Center for Spiritual Living, Seattle.

His mission was to heal and uplift people by sharing his original music, blending gospel and soul musical influences with New Thought teachings and principles.

"When I made that commitment to tour, the Universe gave me homework. So much went wrong!" Watkins laughs, shaking his head. He was most surprised to learn that he had to heal and be healthy. His tour became an inward journey where everything that wasn't for his highest and best good required dissolving or refining.

Fast forward to 2015: Watkins is still on tour "from Seattle to Miami and most red and blue states in between" and driving the

WATKINS HAS PUT MORE THAN 230,000 MILES ON HIS FORD EXPLORER TRAVELING AROUND THE COUNTRY SHARING HIS MESSAGE OF LOVE WITH MUSIC.



same Ford Explorer that now boasts 335,000 miles. After intense personal work resulting in a new kind of peace, Watkins says, *“Everyone is noticing a different me!”*

Rev. Dr. Marigene De Rusha, spiritual director at the Center for Spiritual Living, St. Louis, acknowledges her friend’s accelerated spiritual growth. *“I’ve seen a huge change in Eddie in the past couple of years. No matter what life throws [at] him, he goes deeper inside, bringing out so much joy.”* For his part, Watkins proclaims he is happier than ever by standing in a new power. *“I’m doing what I was supposed to do!”*

MUSIC IS MY CALLING CARD

“Music,” says Watkins, *“is my calling card, my connection to people.”* When he was a young boy growing up in Detroit, Watkins’s grandmother sensed her grandson’s keen interest in music and bought him a piano. His parents hired an instructor who took the bus across town to give their precocious son piano lessons. Watkins’s mother, Phyllis, recalled with a laugh that her basement was often noisy from her son’s jam sessions, singing and playing piano and bass.

As a youth, Watkins developed his musical talent at New Harmony Baptist Church in Detroit. This pleased his parents who are deeply devout in their faith. *“I always wanted him to sing spiritual, uplifting music. His grandmother and I prayed he’d share his music at church,”* Mrs. Watkins says. But other musical opportunities beckoned. By age 13, musicians associated with Detroit-based Motown

Records heard stories of the talented teen and asked him to join local music groups. Soon he was recording bass for the iconic record label.

Watkins says he *“grew up”* at Motown Records, and later he migrated with his wife and young daughters to Los Angeles, where he was an in-demand session player for film soundtracks and a new genre of music called disco. In California, Watkins’s fame and fortune grew, as did his addictions. *“Everybody has a past,”* Watkins says, but proudly adds, *“2015 marks 20 years between cocktails for me.”*

How did this musician leave behind substance abuse, deep depression and praying for death? *“I was anointed!”* Watkins explains. *“It was always about the music for me, and then I decided to become a healer. I know that these gifts are for sharing. My life experience helps others.”*

THE “NOW” MOMENT: TRAVELING ACROSS AMERICA

There is expansive freedom and joy living on the road, Watkins says, and defining moments along his journey have dramatically deepened his faith. He recalls the time he was traveling on Grants Pass between Oregon and California. He *“was listening to music at full volume,”* when it started to snow heavily as he was ascending a big hill. Visibility became poorer, traffic slowed to a standstill and then the fuel gauge light came on. Watkins assumed he could find a gas station, but there were none in sight.

THE ANSWER

What’s going on in this world today?

Where do we fit? What can we do

To make a difference? What can we say?

Where do we go? This way or that way?

If we all pray and truly believe.

*And love one another, we’ll let the world see that
God is the answer, God is the answer.*

God is the answer to whatever the question may be.

Words and Music by Eddie Watkins Jr.



“MUSIC COMING THROUGH ME IS HEALING ME IN ORDER TO BE A HEALING LIGHT IN THE WORLD. IT IS SO NOT ABOUT EDDIE! IT IS ABOUT DIVINE SPIRIT OPERATING AS ME.”

By the “grace of a Higher Power,” he made it to the top then coasted down the hill on an empty gas tank for miles before finding an open service station.

“That was a little nerve-wracking,” Watkins says with understatement. He recalls another time when he was caught in a “horrific” hailstorm in Mississippi.

“Everybody’s windows around me blew out except mine!” He shares that he’s seen people lose their lives on the road. Watkins, however, feels that he is Divinely protected and that he has an additional advantage.

“I prayed over his truck before he left,” says his mother quietly.

Witnessing tragedy has taught Watkins to have a deep appreciation for the “now” moment, and he travels with a favorite book to remember this fact: Eckhart Tolle’s “The Power of Now.”

“The first year on tour, I was always taking pictures. Then I discovered that my life *is* a beautiful picture. I just need to notice what’s here now and call it beautiful — become one with the moment and feel the Oneness. Nothing external can bring me joy.” Watkins calls the spiritual practice of being in the now moment “living with everyday bliss.”

“We don’t have to find joy — we have to reveal joy!”

LEARNING TO TRUST THE UNIVERSE

In addition to travel expenses associated with life on the road, Watkins manufactures music CDs, traveling with a CD duplicating tower and printer, to supplement his music performance honorariums. Being the sole proprietor of his business requires ongoing capital, which initially consumed the musician with worry and stress. Watkins has learned to trust the Universe.

“Contributions come in exactly when I need them,” he says with gratitude, citing television pastor Joel Osteen with expanding his sense of gratitude. “The more grateful I am, the more I have to be grateful for. Thank you, God, I woke up!”

Watkins recently learned that his new song “Money Is Coming to Me,” which he penned as a thank-you gift to contributors, was anonymously uploaded to YouTube, has had over a million views and has been illegally downloaded innumerable times. Instead of being resentful — his old default reaction — he paused until a new thought came.

"Over a million people found my song positive," he said to himself. He then turned the situation into a win-win for listeners and himself by releasing the song for sale digitally within a few days. "Anyone who hears it online now gets routed to my website," Watkins says. "Don't make enemies — make allies!"

DIVINE SPIRIT OPERATING AS ME

Being on tour means Watkins can connect with the people who listen to his music. "A lady came up to my table with tears in her eyes. She told me for years she was afraid to leave the house. She would sit in her car in the garage and put my CD "When You Believe" in the CD player. She said the first two songs, 'It's a New Day' and 'When You Believe,' gave her the courage to eventually leave her garage and start driving."

In another city, a man came up to Watkins and hugged him, telling him that he learned and played Watkins's song "The Garden" at his mother's memorial. It was her favorite song.

Touching stories are recounted to Watkins often, reminding him of a quote from Shakespeare's "Othello": "What wound did heal but by degrees?" He interprets this as, "Music coming through me is healing me in order to be a healing light in the world. It is so *not about Eddie!* It is about Divine Spirit operating as me."

I AM

*I am an instrument through which Spirit reveals on Earth.
Within my soul lies the wholeness of the universe.
All I give and all I have come from the sacred Source.
And it's by grace that I am one with the Divine, and so
I raise my voice in gratitude and prayer.
Grateful for each holy day that I can create whatever
I conceive and believe it as the Truth.
The power of creation is our greatest gift, so I sing
I AM.*

Words and Music by Eddie Watkins Jr.

Traveling along the highway of life, Watkins is learning to heal some old wounds. Teachers like Dr. Larry De Rusha, a facilitator and co-minister with his wife, Marigene, of Center for Spiritual Living, St. Louis, helped him reprogram his traumatic past experiences and engage in powerful internal work on deep listening. Watkins adds, "The teaching of Dr. Ernest Holmes [founder of Science of Mind] brought me to this place of embracing the good. My goal in life is the deepening of consciousness."

Ultimately, Watkins says he is on tour across America to spread the love "like 'butta!'" He recently returned to his hometown Baptist church in Detroit where he sang "I Am the Place Where God Shows Up." Watkins's message in song spiritually impacted the congregation, reports his mother.

This is no surprise to Marigene De Rusha. "Listening to Eddie's music is a mini-sermon," she says. This sentiment pleases Watkins. "I want my music to be like Science of Mind — open at the top and inclusive of all faiths." Mrs. Watkins concurs. "Eddie's music is a message for life." ❀

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON

EDDIE WATKINS JR., INCLUDING HOW TO
PURCHASE HIS NEW CD "ACROSS AMERICA,"
VISIT EDDIEWATKINSJR.COM.

I AM THE PLACE WHERE GOD SHOWS UP

*Sometimes I wonder and ponder,
Only to realize I'm not alone and there's
Nothing I have to do on my own because
I am the place where God lives,
Moves and breathes and has Its being.
I am the place where God shows up.*

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