

5 WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR HIGHER SELF

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Okay; so I want to talk about five ways to activate your higher self. Because I think that sometimes we need a little help moving to that next higher level. And that sometimes we live in this level of life where we're not completely satisfied. Have you ever gone through a day where you just weren't loving? [Congregation laughs] And I want to talk about today: How do we move to higher ground? How do we do that? How do we live the best version of ourselves?

So the question I want to start with this morning is: Are you in service to your ego or your higher self? When you think about how you live your life, are you living from your ego? Or are you living from your higher self?

And for most of us that answer is, "Yes." [Congregation laughs] For most of us, you know, it's all of the above! Because we know that there are times when we touch that presence and power of God; when we know that we're in the flow of the Divine; where everything is moving and we can just feel the presence of God moving through us. And we also know there's times when we're cranky and controlling and trying to manipulate everything all around us to get our needs met. And both of those, for most of us, live as true. And if we're honest with ourselves, think of the times in our lives where we're absolutely 100% operating from our ego.

Shakti Gawain said this:

"Spirit is the essence of consciousness, the energy of the universe that creates all things. Each one of us is a part of that spirit -- a divine entity. So the spirit is the higher self, the eternal being that lives within us all."

So I want to touch that today. I want to talk about that today. And I want to see if, as a community, we can take the next step in activating our higher self. That we can let go of our ego needs long enough to step into this higher dimension of life, where we're truly in the divine flow and being divinely blessed.

The first one is kind of the "I DO" level of life. and the "I DO" level is when you're doing it all. When you're making things happen. When we're living from our ego. When we're controlling or frustrated or pushing and moving life forward. When we're at the "I DO" level of life, we're making everything happen.

And at the "I DO" level of life, it's exhausting! It really is exhausting! Because you just have to keep pushing and pushing and pushing to make your life better. And over and over again, it's just so frustrating; it's disappointing; we're anxious; we're afraid. Because all we have is our own personality; all we have is our own intellect; all we have is our own drive to make life better. So we push and we push and we push.

And the number one sign that you're living from this "I DO" level of life is a high level of anxiety. And most of us do not want to feel our anxiety. So we try to shift that anxiety so we don't feel it. Instead of realizing that the anxiety is a symptom of the problem, and when we can sense and experience our own anxiety, then we can make a change. We can make a new choice.

This next level of life is when we're still in the "I DO" phase ... when we're still fully driven by our ego, but we begin to learn spiritual principles. We begin to understand spiritual principles. so we're still being driven by our ego, but now we have this whole new skill set. Right? We're still trying to make it happen; we're still wanting life to be the way we want it. We're still controlling. But now we're "spiritually" controlling ... [Congregation laughs] And we feel so much more ... We feel so much more

spiritual about it. *"Now I'm spiritually manipulating you; I'm not just manipulating your personality."* And we feel like, *"Oh, I've made so much progress!"* [Congregation laughs] *"Look at all the spiritual principles I can use to make my life better!"*

But the truth is: We're still operating from our ego. We're still being driven by that place of woundedness within us.

And then the next level of life is what I call "WE DO." And the "WE DO" level of life is when God and I are doing it together. And in the "WE DO" level of life, I'm not in the driver's seat any more. I've actually surrendered, and God is now in charge of my life. And I put Spirit, I put God, I put that infinite wisdom and intelligence in front of every situation. And I'm willing to surrender and be at peace and allow the glory of God to move in and through my life.

And what I want you to see today is: I believe that all of us, in one way or another, in one 24-hour period are in all three phases. That, if you tell yourself the truth, I believe there's times when you're anxious and afraid. And I believe that when we are anxious and afraid, we are totally operating from the "I DO" phase.

And there's times when we feel like we're a little bit in the flow, and we can feel the presence of God., but we're still in our ego -- we're still in that "I DO" with spiritual principles. And I believe that there are moments -- like when Jamie (Parnell, the day's soloist) was singing -- where you feel the presence of God so fully that you've surrendered. And you know that God is in charge of your life.

And over and over again, I think it's critically important that we be conscious of where we are. Because when you're being driven by your ego, most of us don't realize it. Most of us are being unconsciously driven by our ego, thinking that we're being spiritual.

But it's only when we can kind of slow this process down and see all the ramifications that we can truly say to ourselves: How much of my day am I spending in "I DO" or "I make it happen" or "I am driven or possessed, and I move forward my life"? How much of my time am I in "I DO" but I'm using spiritual principles? And how much of my time am I literally in the flow of the Divine? Where I am in service to my higher self? Where God is the most important thing happening in that moment and in my life, and I'm in the flow of something so much greater than my own personality?

And when we begin to see all three aspects of how we tend to show up, then we can make a conscious decision. In this place, do I really want to operate from my woundedness? Or am I willing to take a step back and really surrender my life and this situation to allow God to be in charge, and to move my life forward in ways that I couldn't even imagine now?

Because the moment we surrender to God, there's a level of wisdom and power and possibilities that aren't available to our ego. That are always available to us the moment we let go!

So today, I'm going to invite you to look at the places and at the times in your life where you were the most fearful and anxious. [Imitates someone talking to him] *"Richard, no!"* [Congregation laughs] *"No thank you! I don't want to do that! I don't want to focus on that! I take medication so I don't have to feel that!"* Right?

And I want you to see today that there's another option. And the option is: As soon as you begin to feel anxious or afraid about anything, I want you to feel the power that you have to turn it over to God. That you can actually let it go! And feel relief. Because the promise is: As you do your spiritual life, the by-product of living your spiritual life and turning your life over to God is peace. The promise is: The more you know God -- the more you surrender -- the more that you will be given peace. Because you're not doing it alone anymore!

But the more you're driving by your ego, the more you're in service to your ego (and how you look and how you're doing it and what other people think about you), the more anxious and afraid we become until we have the courage to surrender it and let it go.

Can everybody think of at least one area in your life where you've been anxious? Where you've been afraid? And what would happen -- what would it look like today -- if you decided to let God be in charge of that area in your life? If you decided to let the power of God in you -- your Higher Power -- be in charge of that situation fully and completely? Can you even get a sense of the level of relief that would be available to you?

When we look at our world today, there are so many things that could scare us. There are so many things that look outside of our control. And as a community -- especially as a spiritual community -- we have to practice, over and over, going deeper than our fears. And turning it over to God and feeling the activity of Spirit move through us in such a way that our life that our life is better because of it. That we get lifted up to higher ground.

So I want to give you a couple of ways -- I want to give you five ways -- that I believe allow us to activate our higher self.

The first one is going to sound negative, and I'm sorry. I know some of you don't like it when I go negative. But I'm just going to kind of dip in there a little bit. And the first one is **The first way that we truly activate our higher self is to HEAL OUR DEEPEST WOUND.**

And now, I know that some of you are saying, "*Richard, I don't have a wound.*" I say, "*God bless you!*" Right? But some of us do. Right? And when we're unconscious of our deepest wound, we tend to act out from it. When we know and understand our deepest wound, we can actually make a new choice. But when we're unconscious to the way that we've been wounded by life, and we carry that wound into every situation, into every day, into every moment, we actually make it worse. Because now it's kind of bleeding into every situation.

But when we know where we're wounded; when we can see it; when we can see the way that we've acted from it, then we can actually invite Spirit into that place to heal us at depth.

And that's the promise! You can't heal what you can't see. But the moment you can see your woundedness -- the moment you can see the problem -- you can actually invite God into that situation at the depths that you need to be healed. And at that moment, transformation begins to happen.

Being unconscious is not healing. It's just being unconscious. The moment we can see the problem; the moment we can see the wound, we can invite God into that experience, and we can be transformed at depth.

For many of us, to activate our higher self and to live a greater life, we have to be willing to be conscious of the places that we've been hurt in the past, and invite God right there so that we can move beyond the pain of the past and live a brand new lives.

Two. I believe that, **to live from our higher self, it is critical that WE HAVE MORE EXPERIENCES WITH GOD.** I think that prayer and meditation is fundamentally important if we're going to activate our higher self. Because we need to spend more time with God. The more we know God, the more we're willing to surrender to God. The more we learn to quiet our minds and open our hearts and experience the full presence of God, the more that we can be transformed at depth.

Three. I believe that most of us, when we're acting from our ego, have a completely different set of values than when we're acting from our higher self. That when we're acted from our wounded self, survival, looking good, impressing people are some very important values to us. When we're acting from

our higher self, our values are about love and connection, about generosity, about sharing our spirit. And we have a very different value system.

And what I would like you to look at this morning is: What are your higher values? You may know your lower values; you may not be conscious of them. But you may know your lower values. I want you to be really clear about what your higher values are. And come back to your higher values over and over again. That, throughout each day, we need to be checking to see if we're living our higher or our lower values. Because they're not the same!

Our lower values are often about survival. It's about making sure we look good. But our higher values are about expressing the glory of God; about connecting to others. It's about love and generosity. Our higher values are very different from our lower values. And we actually know our higher values; we can actually choose to live a higher life!

There was a time in my life where my life crashed. Some of you were there. And the values that I realized were driving my life at that point had a lot to do with survival. And as I looked at the values that I wanted for the second half of my life, I realized the values that I wanted to live were: I wanted to be happy; free; and wildly in love. And I decided that those three values were going to be my higher values for the second half of my life.

And I could see that the other values were based on fear. There were based on what I didn't want, not what I did want. And when we know what our higher values are, and we check in every day: *"Am I living happy; free; and wildly in love? Am I living peace and joy? Am I living the glory of God? Or am I living the values that I'm afraid I'm going to get caught?"* It's a whole different world.

So three is: **As we activate our higher self, we have to actually KNOW OUR HIGHER VALUES.**

Four. Four is fundamental! It's about a daily surrender of your ego. **To activate your higher self, I believe on a regular basis we have to SURRENDER OUR EGO TO EXPRESS THE DIVINE THAT IS WITHIN US.** That every day, in some way, we have to say to ourselves: *"Not my will, but Thy will be done."* That every day we have to come into the experience of shifting out of my lower self and making a conscious decision to shift into my higher self.

Will you say with me, *"Thy will be done"*?

Together: [with congregation] *"Thy will be done."*

And feel that! Feel how much your ego resists that! *"No!"* Like, if we tell ourselves the truth, our ego doesn't want to let go of control! Our ego knows that, if it lets go of control, it's going to be useless! So it hangs on.

And every day we practice surrendering over and over again to the will of God. In every situation! Surrendering to the will of God and experiencing a greater possibility.

Five. **SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE PEOPLE AND THE THINGS THAT TAKE YOU HIGHER.** When you tell yourself the truth, who are the people in your life that just being in their presence takes you higher? Being around them, being in conversation with them, takes you higher?

See, I believe that there's a need for spiritual community and spiritual teachers. Because the spiritual communities and the spiritual teachers I've had -- and do have -- in my life absolutely take me to higher ground. Just being in their presence I feel better; I feel more connected. I feel more connected to myself and I feel more connected to God.

I believe that we need spiritual community. I believe that we need people around us that take us higher. And if we tell ourselves the truth, not everyone in our life is taking us higher. Do you have some people

in your life that aren't helping? [Congregation laughs] Right? They just aren't taking you higher! And you might not be able to get them out of your life, but you can decide how much time you spend with them. And are you spending time with people that continually invite you to look up and see possibilities? And also the people -- whether it's reading their books or their TED talks, being surrounded by friends and family -- who invite us to go higher.

And also the things: like music. The music today! If the music today doesn't take you higher, I can't help you. [Congregation laughs] I just can't help! Right? The music is so good today that, if you don't feel a lift of your spirit, something's broken. Right? Because music; images; nature ... there's things around us that take us higher.

Today, I want to challenge you to activate your higher self in a greater way. And I want you to see the symptoms when you're operating from your lower self. I want you to see the times when you're living in anxiety and fear. When you're worried about this or that. Because I want you to see is: Every time you're anxious, there's a greater opportunity to surrender. And every time we surrender, we can decide to surrender to our greater self, our higher self, our God-self.

Whatever's going on in your life right now -- whatever's going on in your world -- I believe it's an opportunity for you to play a bigger game; to live a bigger life; to express more God than you've ever known before. Every day, we have the opportunity to check our ego; to surrender our ego; to surrender our process and live the glory of God.

Will you pray with me?

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to all that God is within you. That you were created in the image and likeness of the Divine. Within you was placed every gift from God; every possibility. That we've been endowed by our Creator with the fullness of Spirit. And today, we allow ourselves to activate that Spirit. To activate our higher self. To live the best version of who we are. And when we're anxious and afraid, we surrender our ego. When we are holding the wounds of the past, we invite God into the deepest place within our heart and soul.

Over and over and over again, we choose to be God's shining light. To be the man or woman God created us to be. To stand in the glory of God and allow God to use us for that which we've never done before. So in the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

God bless you all! Have a great week and thank you for being here!

[Congregants applaud]

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