

UNLEASHING THE GENIUS WITHIN YOU

Week #1 of a 2-Week Series

Sunday, September 17, 2023

Rev. Richard Maraj

So this elderly couple noticed that they were starting to forget things, so they were concerned and went to their doctor. The doctor said, "Well, it's just part of being old, so if you want to remember things, just write them down."

So that night they were in bed, and the husband was getting up to go to the kitchen and the wife says, "Hey; could you get me a bowl of ice cream?" And he said, "Sure!"

She said, "Don't you think you should write it down? The doctor said you should just write it down."

"Write it down? It's only ice cream! I can remember that!"

Then she said, "Oh, I want strawberries with the ice cream. Can you add some strawberries?" And he said, "Sure!"

She said, "Don't you want to write it down? You should write it down so you don't forget!"

He said, "I can remember ice cream and strawberries."

"And I want some whipped cream on it. Can you add some whipped cream on it, too?"

And then he said, "I'm going to remember it; I don't need to write it down. Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream."

So he goes into the kitchen. Thirty minutes later, he comes in and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. [Congregation laughs]

The wife stares at the plate for a moment and shakes her head in disgust, "You forgot my toast!" [Congregation laughs]

So how many people have heard that statistic that says we only use 10% of our brain or 10% of our potential? How many people have heard that? That's not true ... but it is mostly true that we have more ... Science says we have more brain power, more brilliance, more talent, ability and genius than we realize, and far, far more than we actually utilize and apply in our daily lives.

How many people would admit that there's one area in your life -- at least one area -- where you're not fully applying yourself or doing your best in something you'd like to have improve? Anybody?

How many people -- if you could start your life over again -- believe that you would create and experience and enjoy so much more than what you've done up to this point? How many people agree with that?

And last one is: Even from now -- whatever's going on in your life -- how many people know you still have the potential for greater happiness, love, success in all areas? How many people agree?

You know, Buckminster Fuller said, *"I am convinced that all of humanity is born with more gifts, talent and potential than they know. Most are born geniuses, but the process of living 'de-geniuses' us."*

[Congregation laughs]

That we all have genius and brilliance within us, but somehow society, culture, our families, religion dissuade. They don't recognize, dismiss and even devalue so that some of these incredible, brilliant things within ourselves lay dormant and are underutilized.

The Apostle Paul, in the Book of Romans 12:2 said, *"Do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* He's saying: If you want your life to get better -- if you want it to change or improve -- begin by renewing and transforming your mind, and not conforming to the things that "de-genius" us and hold us back from expressing the greatness within ourselves.

There are six things that we do that we begin to participate in "de-geniusing" and holding back our own greatness. And here are the things – where we are not using our mind as effectively as we can. Because we can transform our lives through our mind. And here are the six things we conform to that don't help us express our genius.

The first one is **worry**. How many people here worry? Or have ever worried a lot? How many people worry so much that when you have nothing to worry about, you get worried? [Congregation laughs] Anybody have ...? Worry consumes us! It means "to choke off"; the word "worry" comes from the root word "to choke off." We choke off the flow of our genius, our goodness and joy.

Second thing we do to conform to the patterns that aren't healthy for us is: **We fill our minds with fearful thoughts.** Fear and doubt.

The third thing is that **we think negatively.** We think, *"Oh; there will be no solution! This will never work! This isn't right!"*

And then the fourth one is **thoughts of lack and scarcity.** *"There's never enough; there's not enough*

Another one is worthiness. When **we feel unworthy** it is hard for us to express our beauty, our greatness and our genius.

And the last thing that we do is when **we compare ourselves to others** and judge ourselves against others.

Einstein said, *"Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by how he climbs a tree ... [congregation laughs] ... it'll believe it's stupid all of its life."*

And so there are ways that we hold ourselves back. We have this brilliant mind, this incredible brain. But we don't utilize the most effectively to bring forth the genius and the brilliance that is within us.

There's a fabulous book called *How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci* by Michael Gleb. And in it, he said that Leonard Da Vinci is the greatest genius of all great geniuses, including Einstein and Tesla, Shakespeare, Madam Curie, Galileo ... And before reading this book, I only knew Da Vinci from *The Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*. But Da Vinci was born in 1452. He was not only an artist, he was an architect, a sculptor, an inventor. He invented the first prototype for the helicopter; for a parachute; for the extendable bladder; three-speed gear shift; a machine for cutting the threads in a screw; for the bicycle; for the adjustable monkey wrench; a snorkel; a hydraulic jack; the first revolving stage; the locks for a canal; a horizontal waterwheel; folding furniture; the olive press; and a water-powered alarm clock. I would have loved to have seen that one! [Congregation laughs]

He was a military engineer; he came up with all kinds of weapons. He was a scientist. He was the first ever to make a cast of the ventricles and of the brain. He pioneered the botanical sciences, being the first one to explore the phenomenon of soil erosion. Forty years before Copernicus, he said the sun does not move. Two hundred years before Newton, he said every weight tends to fall toward the center by the shortest way possible.

Da Vinci was a genius. But the genius thing is: It was not how intelligent he was; it was not how much he accomplished. It was the mindset out of which he looked at life. It was the way he used his mind to extract the greatest ideas and possibilities within him.

Michael Gleb, in his book, says that we all have genius; the only thing is, we don't know how to use it to tap into our mind to bring it forth in the greatest ways. And he said there are seven Da Vincian principles -- seven Da Vincian mindsets -- that he utilized that made his mind and his brain such an open channel for the deeper inspiration, greatness and genius to come forth from within him.

So what we're going to do for the next two weeks: We're going to look at the seven Da Vincian principles for drawing forth and bringing forth your greatness and the genius within.

Today we're only going to look at the first two. Next week we'll look at the next five. Because these, I think, are worth a little extra time.

And so the first thing to bring forth and unleash the genius within us **TO DEVELOP A CURIOUS MIND**. To have a curious mind. Da Vinci was curious about life. He was curious about flowers. He was curious about trees. He was curious about the sun and the stars and machinery and about how everything worked. And it was because of his curiosity, it opened a path for his genius and creativity to come forth.

Now often our idea of curiosity is only for two things: cats and kids. [Congregation laughs] We think it is for the immature mind who isn't quite grown up yet. I loved being fascinated by everything. When I was a kid, the most fascinating thing I thought was my sister's Easy Bake Oven. [Congregation laughs] I was fascinated how a lightbulb could bake a cake; really, is that not amazing? I still think I am fascinated by that!

My question is: What fascinates you in life? A fascinated, curious mind keeps us engaged and active and alive! It actually helps us grow and learn and expand and bring forth even more brilliant and wonderful ideas. And I talk about continued curiosity, because we are born curious! But somehow we get conditioned out of it, and it disconnects us from our true self. It disconnects us from greater possibilities and that inner joy.

Jesus said, *"To enter the kingdom of heaven, you must become as a ..."* [Congregants: "Child"] Child! Thank you to three people who know that. [Congregation laughs] But to become like a child: Children are innocent and pure. They're creative. They see possibilities. They try and explore and examine things. I mean, it is a beautiful and wonderful thing.

So one of the first ways to awaken this Da Vincian quality in ourselves is to rediscover play. To rediscover joy and creativity and fun ... And art and writing and other forms of your creative expression. To begin to bring those forth. Because curiosity energizes and engages us, and helps us learn, explore and discover more: more within ourselves and more within our world.

Einstein said, *"I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious."*

Michael Gleb says that great minds are curious minds. Great minds ask great questions. And sometimes it's important to ask: *"Why?"* Or, *"Why not?"* Or, *"How does this work?"* *"How could you make it work better?"* *"How could I approach or see this situation from a more positive perspective?"* *"What is the best decision for me in this particular situation for it to improve?"* Asking questions ... Asking is a powerful thing!

When Jesus said, *"Ask and you shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and the door will be opened unto you"* ... For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds. Everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. We have to realize that the quality of our lives is reflected in the quality of questions that we ask.

Asking questions comes from two places: frustration or fascination. When we're frustrated with how things are going, or having some negative reaction, we ask questions like, *"Why is this happening to me again?"* *"Why am I the one that always gets hurt?"* *"Why do I always struggle with money?"* *"Why do I*

always get passed over in the promotions?" "When will my bad luck end?" "Why can't I find someone?" These are questions out of frustration. And you even hear them; the question almost wants to attract more of the thing that we don't want!

And the other one is the aspect of asking questions from a place of fascination ... of curiosity to learn, to discover and to call forth something good. Questions like, *"What can I do to help improve my relationship?" "How can I experience more peace of mind and inner joy?" "What can I learn from this challenging situation?"* Or, *"What do I need to stop doing in my life to make my life better? And what do I need to start doing?" "What do I need to let go?" "What in me needs some healing and attention?" "How can I better serve my fellow man?" "How can I add more laughter and playfulness and joy into my life?" "How can I better express the gifts that are within me?"*

And so what are the quality of questions that you're asking life? What is it that you're really seeking? What door are you knocking on that you want to be opened that will bring you greater joy and happiness?

Socrates says that every one of us has genius and brilliance and knowledge within us, but questions are the way that we bring it out. By asking powerful, good quality questions, it draws out our brilliance, our genius, our greatness. It brings forth the desires of our hearts and the things that we want to create and experience.

Martin Luther King had a curious mind, and he asked the question, *"How can we achieve freedom and equality for all people?"*

Nelson Mandela asked, *"How can we end apartheid?"*

Henry Ford asked, *"How do you make a car? And how can I make produce them?"*

Ray Croc said, *"How can I get a good hamburger when I'm traveling on the road?"* [Congregation laughs] And he bought McDonald's and literally revolutionized the fast food industry.

And so my question is: What are the questions you want to ask life? What are the big, curious questions? Questions are really about your curiosity of possibility. So when Jesus said, *"Ask and you shall receive,"* he's saying: Be curious! It's unlimited! Expand your heart and your mind to greater possibilities.

And so the thing is: For us to awaken the genius within ourselves, we need to renew our mind by reawakening our curiosity. Like a child, be fascinated by the things that are around you. Find that fascination and ask great questions of possibilities, of curious things. Of, *"Why not?" "How about this?" "How can my life get better?" "How can I have greater joy and fulfillment in my life?"* Ask these questions, because they open our minds to possibilities and to bring forth the genius within us.

And the second one **TO ENLIVEN OUR EXPERIENCES**. One of the things that Da Vinci believed is: Life has to be experienced. You can't just talk about it; you can't just read about it; you have to live it and experience it. You have to taste it richly and deeply. It's one thing to read about eating a ripe, juicy, sweet peach; it's a whole other thing to experience it. It's one thing to read about a passionate, wonderful kiss; it's a whole different thing to experience it.

How many people remember the movie, *Good Will Hunting*? Robin Williams, Ben Affleck, Matt Damon. Matt Damon was this really, really, genius, intelligent guy. But he struggled in an area of being vulnerable and opening up in his relationships and feeling his feelings. And sometimes we can hide behind our intelligence, and it stops us from truly feeling and experiencing life. And in this one scene, Matt Damon is sort of avoiding going to feelings and sharing about how smart it is. And Robin Williams said to him, "You might know every detail about the Sistine Chapel, and you may have read *Oliver Twist*

and know all about it, but the truth is: You don't know what the Sistine Chapel smells like and you don't know what it's like to really be an orphan."

And what he was trying to say -- I liked that apparently more than you ... [Congregation laughs] ... but that was a great scene in the movie! And what he was saying is: You can know stuff, but it's only when you experience things. And it's about opening our hearts to feel and really be fully present to the experiences that are in our lives.

Da Vinci said that we need to use our five senses to truly feel and experience life, because that's what opens us to a fuller and richer experience of life. Here's what he said. He said, *"The five senses are the ministers of the soul, yet the average person looks without seeing; listens without hearing; touches without feeling; eats without tasting; and moves without physical awareness; inhales without the awareness of odor or fragrance; and talks without thinking."*

Da Vinci was saying we need to enliven and awaken our lives by being present to our senses. Appreciating them and using them and enjoying them, because that's what helps us feel more fully alive.

Og Mandino talked about being a part of the living dead ... that sometimes we're moving around, but we're not living! We're not feeling; we're not experiencing! Sometimes we're so busy that we just ram our food down our throat; we don't even taste it. Sometimes we move by people and don't feel them. We feel disconnected from our own lives, even though we are alive. There are so many things we miss out on by not being present and experiencing them.

I told you I went -- I think it was about five years now -- I went to a silent retreat. It was a 10-day silent retreat, and we meditated. We did not speak at all, and we meditated for 11 hours a day. And I'll tell you: You couldn't talk; you couldn't do anything. And you ate alone; you did everything alone! And one of the most amazing experiences for me -- and I've shared this -- was eating in silence. Not looking or talking to anyone; just being there alone with the food and connecting with yourself. And I'll tell you: I like peanut butter on toast. But I'll tell you: Eating that peanut butter on toast alone in quiet; the toast never felt as crunchy ... [congregation laughs] ... and the peanut butter never felt as creamy and smooth. It was a whole layer and level of life and experience that I was missing, that I do every single day! But because I was more awakened to my senses, and absolutely present to it, it absolutely enriched a simple activity like eating into something more fulfilling. More nourishing and more meaningful.

Several years ago, I went on a ski trip to Breckenridge, Colorado. They have an adaptive ski program there. I was flying in on Sunday night; it was on Monday morning; and I flew out on Tuesday. I woke up on the Monday morning with chills and a fever, feeling horrible, thinking, *"There's no way I can get out of this bed!"* And this other part of me is like, *"Heck, man; I didn't come all this way to not experience skiing."* I've never been downhill skiing before. I went cross-country skiing in Canada when I was a kid, and I hated it! [Congregation laughs] And so I wanted to try this downhill skiing thing!

So I went there, got into the training. Going up the lift was so gorgeous; so beautiful to see the trees and the snow. Coming down a few times. And there was a trainer and a trainee. An instructor and a trainee. And the instructor was saying, *"Make sure you do this; make sure you do that. Go back and forth and back and forth. Don't go down too fast."*

And so, after three times down the hill, the trainer left and I was left with the trainee. Hey, hey!!!! [Congregation laughs] So I started cutting down fast. I went so fast I was out of control! I did a complete flip in the air and just crashed into the snow. [Congregation moans] And the trainee came and said, *"Man, you okay? You okay?"* And I said, *"Hey, did I do a somersault, man?"* [Congregation laughs] I thought that was the coolest thing in the world! When am I going to do a somersault? It was one of the best experiences of my life! To have experienced it ... I could have read all I did about skiing, but it was one of the great experiences of my adult life.

Just got back from an Alaskan cruise with my family. And just beholding the beauty of nature was such an incredible experience. Being with my family; eating; and laughing. It was incredible!

And then I got the gift of something that was not Covid, but really resembled it. And it knocked me on my butt! [Congregation laughs] From the time I left the cruise, for 10 days I've been really, really sick and not feeling my best. And so, at the beginning, it was like, "*How do I bring my senses into this experience while I feel like I'm swallowing razor blades and my head hurts? And I've got a fever and a backache?*" But I'll tell you; after a couple of days, I started realizing that, "*I just need to go with this.*" And so I felt all those things; I enjoyed my egg drop soup; I watched movies; I slept; I did some emails as I could. And I got to experience it instead of hating it.

We avoid so many experiences because they're not comfortable. But all experiences must be felt and tasted and experienced so that we're fully engaged and fully alive in it.

And my question is: What are the things that you want to experience? And what are the things that you're currently experiencing that you could experience more by letting yourself taste it and smell it and touch it and feel it, and truly experience it at a far deeper level? Just like I did with eating that peanut butter on toast.

Because the truth is: Whether it is eating food or going on some adventurous thing or beholding the beauty of nature or getting sick, life is meant to be experienced. And it's what enriches us! I'll bet you if we did nothing different -- activities and otherwise -- rather than letting ourselves be more present to what we're doing, we will feel more fulfilled and more joyful and more happy.

Yesterday I had an interesting and fabulous experience. I married a couple who had already been married to each other for 30 years. They separated for three years; they got divorced. They've been together for the last 18 years. And after being together for 50 years, yesterday they decided to get married. And their son was there; their two grandkids were there. The groom's brother was there. And it was an amazing experience! To see people who have been through so much together -- highs and lows and ups and downs. And at 82 and 73, respectively, decided they wanted to experience getting married again. I tell you, it was an honor to be a part of it, and it was a great experience for me.

Life is a beautiful thing! And we miss out on so much by holding back or avoiding things instead of diving in and letting ourselves feel it ... from our food to the beauty of nature to being with our loved ones and looking and smiling at them while we look into their eyes. All of these incredible experiences are there if we lend ourselves to it and deepen ourselves in them.

You know, the Middle Ages were from the 1476 to about the 14th century ... but a thousand years. It's marked and also called "The Dark Ages," because there was a decline in culture; there was a decline in science. People weren't learning and they weren't growing. And then there was the Renaissance! And this was like an awakening of creativity and innovation and inventions. And life came back again; it was a rebirth!

And when we aren't tapping into the genius within, it's like The Dark Ages in ourselves, because we're not growing. But it's like a rebirth when we awaken our curiosity and when we're fascinated by life and ask big question -- curious questions of possibility. And when we allow ourselves to experience our senses of all experiences.

So this week I encourage you to awaken your curiosity and to enliven your senses in all the things you experience. Because they are the first two steps to unleash the genius within you!

God bless you all! [Congregants applauds]

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