

THE OPRAH PRINCIPLE

Week #1 of a 4-Week Series, "Strategies of Successful People"

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Alright; you ready?

I want to talk about the gap. [Congregation laughs] You know, when you talk about a gap: what gap you talking about? I want to talk about the gap between who you know you are and how much of you that you're really living.

Because I think there's this gap in most of us, right? That we know we can feel, we can sense our potential and the possibilities of who we are, and yet we can also feel the limitations that we've lived with. And there's this gap between who we know we're called to be, and really how much we're living day in and day out.

And that gap is both wonderful and frustrating. Like, it's kind of cool to think that you have all this potential. And at the same moment, it's kind of maddening. "*Like, I've got all this potential; what the heck am I doing with it? Why am I watching this crud on TV when I should after all the things that I'm really called to do in the world? Like, I know I'm here for a bigger purpose! But why don't I let myself live it? Why aren't I about that? And what would it really take for me to be about the potential that's within me?*"

And I want to go there tonight. And I want to talk about how we do that. Because I believe that, for most of us, what would allow us to live more of who we are is trusting our desires. And I think for some of us, I'm not sure that we're always even conscious about what we really want: the deeper desires. Not the superficial desires on the surface, but I'm talking about the deeper desires -- the desires that God has for you. The desires that are transformative and fabulous and wonderful. And sometimes we kind of allow ourselves just to entertain those greater desires. And sometimes we just don't want to know.

So the question that I really have for you tonight is: In this process of you giving birth and expressing you, do you know what you really want? Do you know the higher, deeper, greater desires of your heart? And if you do know what they are, what's your commitment level to that? How important is that to you?

See, the question that I really want us to hear tonight is: Why would we ever be unconscious to our greatest desire? Why would we ever not want to know? And I came up with five, right? These five reasons why I think that sometimes we simply don't want to know what we truly, deeply, profoundly want from life.

The first one is: We feel unworthy of our desires. We feel like: Well, I may want it, but I'm not really worthy of it. So if I know what I desire, and I'm not worthy of it, it's just going to create more pain and tension in my life. So it's better for me just not to know than know and feel unworthy of having it." I mean, it's cruel, right? Like, "I want it so much! But I feel so unworthy of having it, there's this gap that's just hard.

Two: I know what I want, but I'm incapable of having it. I know what I want, but I'm incapable of getting there. I'm not able to actually get to where I want to be in my life. So I'd rather just not see it; I'd rather not know it than feel incapable of actually having it.

Three: If I knew what I really wanted, it would be too much work. So it's just easier not to know. Like, I don't want to put in a lot of extra effort, so it's just better for me not to know than actually know. Because then it would just be too much work, and I'd have to actually do something with my life.

Four: If I knew what I wanted, I'd have to do something about it, which is kind of a variation. And I'm not sure I'm really willing to shake up my life. And I'm not sure I really want to move things around. So it's better for me just not to know.

And the fifth one is: Ignorance is bliss. If I don't know, I'm never disappointed. So it's just better for me never to know. Then I'm never disappointed. And I can just walk in the ignorance of my bliss.

Now, I have five statements that I'm going to invite you to play with tonight as an anecdote for those five conditions.

The first one is: I am worthy of all that I desire.

Will you say that with me? [With congregation] *"I am worthy of all that I desire."*

Now, the first time you say that, it's probably not going to change too much in your mind and your heart. Like, if you say, *"I'm worthy of all I desire,"* but you spent your whole life feeling unworthy, it might give you a bump, but it's not really going to change a lot. If you actually entertain that thought -- *"I am worthy of all that I desire"* -- it's going to be a slow process of a deep transformation happening within you. So that over and over again, it becomes more accessible to you to really have what you want.

I am worthy of all that I desire.

Will you say that with me? *"I am worthy of all that I desire."*

Two: I am powerful and able to create what I desire.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am powerful and able to create what I desire."*

Now, for many of us, this is going to be a game-changer! Because we've wanted to believe that we're anything but powerful. We've wanted to believe that we just can't. And the moment we begin to change our thinking -- that *"I am powerful and able to create what I desire"* -- it's a game-changer.

Three: I create my life with ease and grace.

Together: [with congregation] *"I create my life with ease and grace."*

Four: I am powerful and I know the desires of my heart.

Together: [with congregation]: *"I am powerful and I know the desires of my heart."*

And five: I feel the joy of being a powerful creator.

Together: [with congregation] *"I feel the joy of being a powerful creator."*

See, I want us to begin to practice tonight moving from unconscious desires to conscious desires. I want you to actually see, not only what your soul wants, but literally what God wants to give you. That for many of us, we haven't allowed ourselves to actually envision all the good that God wants to give us. We take a little piece and we think, "That's it! I don't want to ask for too much. I don't want to be a greedy little piggie." Right? So we just cut a little piece off of life and say, "I should just be happy with this."

But over and over again, what I promise you is that the will of God for each one of us is greater good than you can imagine! It's for us!

So for the next four weeks, I've picked one successful person and I want to reveal their success strategy. So tonight we're going to look at Oprah -- The Oprah Principle. Next week we're going to look at Buffett. I thought about Jimmy and I went for Warren. [Congregation laughs] I thought about doing "Pirates Looking at 40," but I decided I was going to go in a different direction. The third week we're going to

look at Steve Jobs. And the fourth week we're going to look at Walt Disney and what he said about success.

So are we ready? Let's hit the button; let's go to Oprah.

[Brief video clip plays]:

Oprah: *Now you know the most exciting chapter to me in "Seat of the Soul?"*

Gary Zukav: *What's that?*

O: *It is the principle by which I rule my company and the principle by which I rule every action in my life, and that is - INTENTION!*

GZ: *Yes. Yes.*

O: *Intention!*

GZ: *That's at the heart of it. That's at the heart of creating authentic power.*

O: *Yes.*

GZ: *Intention.*

O: *To the point where, now, people make jokes about it. I mean, everybody -- I've said it so often. You know, when I first learned about intention from you and -- this is what everybody needs to know who's on the path of spiritually opening yourself up, awakening -- is that it's difficult. It's challenging when you say, "I want to grow; I want to be better than I have known myself to be."*

So I used to have the disease to please. And intention cured me. So shortly after I had read the chapter on intention, I got a call from a very famous celebrity who was asking me to do something for them. And to be a part of a benefit. And I really didn't want to do it, but I thought, "Well, if I don't do it, this person's going to think I'm not a nice person. This person's going to think I'm a selfish person. This person's going to think, 'Well, why wouldn't you do it for me?'" I was thinking If I don't do it, then the person's going to never want to do anything for me if I ever call on them again.

And I sat with that and realized not one single response to being asked had anything to do with: do I really want to give of myself, my time and attention?

GZ: *That's right.*

O: *I realized in that moment that my disease to please had always been about wanting people to think I was a certain way. So I said, "No." The world did not fall apart; the person didn't hate me afterwards. Because of that, I got the courage to say "No" again and again and again. And so now I only do what I intend to do.*

Isn't that great? So that's Gary Zukav, the author of *The Seat of the Soul*. The chapter seven on intention. And I want you to see tonight that intention links our desire with a spiritual commitment. And this is why it's so powerful! Because with intention, we can actually overcome all the resistance we have within us to live a greater life. That the moment you set an intention, it is actually our commitment to live and express the fullness of who we are. And that power is about linking our spiritual commitments.

Now, not all commitments are spiritual. Does that make sense to everybody? Like, can you think of a time in your life where you wanted to have control over everything? Now, is that a spiritual commitment? If you make a person commitment to have control over everything, is that a spiritual commitment? No! It's an ego commitment, right?

Do you have a friend or a family member that you know that, if you were in charge of your life, their life would be better? [Congregation laughs] Now, Is that a spiritual commitment? [Laughs] Or an ego commitment? It's an ego commitment! And the way that you know the difference is: Ego commitments lead to stress. They just do! When we've made an ego commitment in a situation with another person in our life, it leads to a high level of stress. When we make a spiritual commitment, it leads to a profound sense of joy. Because it's our soul on the path of expressing its fullness and knowing its greatness.

So Gary Zukav says, *"Every experience and every change in your life reflects an intention."* And what I want you to see today is: The intention that I want to place before you is the intention of being your best self and expressing all the gifts and talents and abilities of God that is within you. And really experimenting and playing and delving deep into this idea: How much can I really do? How much can I give? How much can I be? How much can I express in my life to be the man or woman that God has created me to be?

Because this gap is so frustrating! To know that you are more than you've ever lived. And then we try to find ways to settle for being less than the truth of who we are.

And the power that allows us to be more -- to overcome the limitations of our past -- is this power that we call intention. A power that allows us to link our will with the will of God.

Gary says, *"Every experience, every change in your experience, reflects an intention. An intention is not only a desire. It is the use of will."*

Intentions are this link between your desire and a commitment. And when we begin to set intentions, we actually move from unconscious living to conscious living.

Now, what was your intention for today? *"Well, I don't know, Richard! I got out of bed; I had my coffee; and I went through the motions. I did all the things I was supposed to do."*

And I want you to see that, for many of us, we feel so busy with life that we don't take two minutes, five minutes, and set an intention for every day.

But when we do set an intention for every day, we move from unconscious doing to conscious living. And that's a huge difference! That's a huge change and transformation that happens in our life.

So when you look at today, what was your intention? Coming to church tonight: What was your intention? Living your whole life: What's your intention for this life experience? When we move from unconscious doing to conscious intention, we actually activate more and more of the glory of God that's within us.

Sometimes people will say to me, *"Well, Richard, I didn't come to church tonight because I was feeling kind of good."* [Congregation titters] Right? And it's like, okay; so I get that you might have a different intention for church than I do! Right? Because I believe that what we're creating here is an experience that blesses all of us. And that I want you to come to church when you're feeling empty. Because I know that if you come to church and you're feeling empty, you're going to have an experience that fills you up. But I also believe that, when you come to church and you're feeling full, God's going to put somebody near you, in front of you, behind you, around you, that is feeling empty, and your goodness, your love, your light, your blessing is going to rub off on them. And I'm not always sure how ... but they're going to leave feeling better. And because we have an intention to create something greater than all of the individual parts, something powerful happens!

So if you tell yourself the truth, do you have an intention for your life?

Do you have an intention for today? Do you have an intention for this experience?

Because most of us are unconscious doers. We do it; we do everything we feel like we have to do, but we do it from an unconscious place. So we never get the maximum bang; we never really get the maximum level of good that's available to us. But all it really takes is two minutes, five minutes, to say, "Okay; so what is my intention for this day? What is my intention for this week?" Not just what I want to get done! Because many of us spend more time on our "to do" list, which is activities -- getting things done -- than we do: "What do I really want to create today? What do I want to be today? What's my intention for who I am this day, this week, this month, this life?"

Because the more we become conscious about who we want to be, the more life gets better. It's richer. It's fuller. We actually move from unconscious living to conscious being. And that's the spiritual process.

Can everybody think of a phase in your life where you were pretty unconscious? Right? And how much fun was that? How much fun was it to do, day after day after day after day after day, just unconsciously going through the motions of life? It's no fun! But when we wake up every day and say, "*What is my intention for today? What do I really want to create today? Who do I want to be today?*"

In that activity -- in that two minutes, that five minutes, of you actually stopping yourself before you launch into your day and become conscious about every day -- you have the possibility of creating everything and anything! But if you just go through your day one day after another, not much change ever happens. We're just getting stuff one, but we're not being transformed in the process.

Life isn't here just to get it done. Life is here to call us to be higher, greater versions of ourselves.

So how do we do that? Well, I want to talk about how we really learn to set intentions for our lives.

The first ... If you want to set an intention -- if you want to start your day with an intention -- the first thing I want you to do is **CONNECT WITH YOUR JOY**. Because there's something that happens when we connect with our joy that moves us out of our ego and moves us into a more spiritual realm. Like, if you think about creating today or tomorrow or this week, and you connect with your joy, the possibilities become greater after you connect with your joy.

Now, when you think about your "to do" list, do you get happy? Most of us don't! Most of us, when we see our "to do" list, it's a little overwhelming. There's not a bit sense of, "*Oh, thank goodness! I'm so happy I get to get all this stuff done this week! It's going to feel great!*" That's not the experience that most of us have! But when we start with our joy, it actually connects us to our spirit.

Second thing I want you to do is: I want you to **CONNECT WITH DIVINE CAUSE**. That activity of God that wants to express through you. And the question I'm going to invite you into with the second aspect of this is: What would I love to create? When you get into your joy, I want you to ask yourself from that place of joy: What would I love to create? What would I love to create today? What would I love to create with this year? What would I love to create in this experience? What would I love to create with my life? What would I love to create?

Three: That once you know what you'd love to create, there has to be a movement of **AGREEMENT BETWEEN YOU AND DIVINE CAUSE**. There's a part of you that has to say, "*Yes! I'm willing to do this. Yes! I am committed to this! Yes! I'm going to move in that direction!*" Because you can have all these ideas, but until you say, "Yes!" to that spiritual commitment, those are just possibilities. But the moment you say, "Yes!" to a spiritual commitment, that possibility becomes empowered and becomes your next reality. Right? And I want you to see yourself saying, "Yes!" to those possibilities in your life.

And then four is to **SET AN INTENT**. And the way that I think is the easiest way to set an intent is to say, "*I will do this, but I will do it with grace and ease.*" See, if you do it from your ego, there's a very low commitment to grace and ease. Can you think of a hundred things that you've done from your ego

through the course of your life that there was no grace? There was no ease? It wasn't the activity of God moving through you; it was your ego making it happen, and your ego made sure it happened.

But when you make an intention -- a true spiritual intention -- there also has to be the acknowledgement that you're going to do it with grace and ease. That you're going to allow the power of God to move through you to make it happen.

Now, let me give you some examples.

John F. Kennedy, September 12, 1962, at Rice University gave a speech that has been entitled, "We Choose to Go to the Moon." In this speech, he set an intention for the nation that we will send a man to the moon before 1970 and bring him back safely. Eight years. He set an intention that would galvanize the nation into a possibility.

Now, the computers that they were using in 1962 had cards. They had stacks of cards. He was making a commitment to send a man to the moon knowing that the way we were going to get there was through stacks of cards.

Have you ever seen those old computers? They had big stacks of cards, and they'd run them through! And your watch or your phone has more computing power than the computers that they were using to figure out how to send a man to the moon! They had cards! [Congregation laughs] They had cards! And he set an intention that was impossible! But he set an intention, and the nation believed him. And it happened. It happened!

Matthew 17:20: *"If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move and nothing will be impossible to you."*

Job 22:28: *"You shall decree a thing, and it will be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways."*

Martin Luther King on August 28, 1963, stood in front of the Lincoln Memorial and he gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. And in that speech, he set an intention for the world and especially for our country. And I want to read two paragraphs from that speech and the way that he set an intention for what could be:

"So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

And then the very last paragraph:

"And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last."

See, what I want you to see is: Those individuals who have the courage to set an intention -- and to invite us to live in it with them -- actually change the world. That if you want to change your life -- if you want to change your world -- I want you to see the power of every day waking up and setting an intention for that day. And it may seem like a little thing. But living one more day unconsciously doesn't change anything.

And if every day you wake up and say, *"Today my intention is, with grace and ease, to be about this ... to create this ... to live this ..."* then every day you're going to be empowering yourself to do more than you've ever done before.

We, as a nation and as people, have spent too much time unconsciously doing. We have to awaken. In every day, in every experience. To be willing to say: *"What is my intent?"* And then to live that intention. And then get up the next day and do it again and again and again. And every day that gap between who you are and who you could be gets a little bit smaller until one day you realize that you are truly the man or woman that God created you to be.

Will you pray with me?

Tonight I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God that is right here, right now. That the glory of God truly is within each and every one of us. And as we awaken from the sleep walking of our lives, and every day we set an intention that is bigger and greater than we have ever done before, and we live into those intentions, we truly discover how much God is within us. For the glory of God is upon us. And we are wildly blessed. And so it is. Amen.

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