

SHOW UP FULLY

Week #6 of a 10-Week Series, "Your Spiritual Quest: The Adventure of Your Life!"

Sunday Feb. 18, 2024

So this pompous colonel who was just promoted was sitting in his new office with his feet up on his desk and just feeling pride that he got this higher ranking. There was a knock on the door and it was a private. And the colonel wanted to impress him, so he put his feet up on the desk and put the phone to his ear. And then he told the young man to come in and he said into the phone, "Yes, General I will be seeing the Brigadier this afternoon and I will pass on the top secret message. I know it's a matter of national security, but you can absolutely trust me. In the meantime, thank you for the good wishes, sir. I appreciate it. Goodbye."

And then feeling like he had sufficiently impressed this enlisted young man, the colonel said, "Now, what do you want?" And the private said, "Oh, nothing really urgent, sir. I just came in to hook up your phone line." [Congregants laugh] Okay; so

So how many people believe that you get back what you put out into the universe? [Congregants: "Yeah!"] How many people believe that? How many people believe that our thoughts have a creative energy that will create more like itself? And finally, how many people believe if you focus on the abundant good in your life that you will attract and experience more abundant good?

You know, we are powerful spiritual beings, and a part of our power is that we get the power to create. We're creative beings. And the great power that we have is to change and transform and improve our lives; to attract greater things into our lives.

And I would say the greatest power that we have to make all our powers possible is: we've been given the power of free will. We have been given the power to choose. We get to choose what we think. We get to choose what we say. We get to choose our mindset, our intentions and our attitudes. You know, we choose the energy that we put out into the universe. We are creative beings governed under the Law of Attraction; the Law of Cause and Effect; and the Law of Mind Action.

And the biggest choice that we make -- that impacts our energy and our joy and the amount we learn and grow and the level of success and progress we make -- is the choice of how we show up every day.

How we show up in our lives; how we show up in our relationships; how we show up in our work; how we show up for ourselves in our level of self-care and our well-being and our spiritual practices. How we show up in our community; how we show up for our friends. We are the ones that get to choose our own mindset, our own consciousness, our own outlook of what we focus on and what we create.

So my question for you is: Think about how you've shown up in your life. And how many people have at least one area where you know you could possibly show up a little better and more fully than you're currently showing up.

Today we're in Week #6 of our 10-week series called "Your Spiritual Quest: The Adventure of Your Life." Because every one of us is on a spiritual quest to know our oneness with God; to unify our mind with the mind of God. And whether you call it the Christ consciousness or self-realization of the fulfillment of our spiritual potential, every one of us is on a spiritual quest.

Week #1 was entitled, "Bring It On!" You know, sometimes we shy and run away from certain things. But the truth is: if we're on a spiritual quest, that means everything in our lives happens for a reason. And we need to face and embrace all of it and say, "Bring it on!" so we can fulfill our spiritual quest.

Week #2 was called "Dream Big!" Sometimes we play small, but we are really called to dream big. We live in an abundant universe and, as creators, dreaming opens the doors of unlimited possibilities for us to attract into our lives and our world.

Week #3 was called "Love Large." Sometimes we shut our hearts off sometimes. And the truth is: if we want to know the fullness of life, we have to know the fullness of love. And we need to open our hearts to the fullness of that love within us: to ourselves, to our God, to others. And especially to those that we might be struggling with.

Week #4 was "Roll with the Changes." Change is constantly happening, because it's the renewing principle of life. And even though it's the renewing principle and we go through so many changes, we often resist change, and we often fight against change. And the truth is: we've got to roll with it to show where it is meant to lead us and to unfold and bring greater things into our lives.

Last week we talked about "Going Deeper." You know, sometimes we pray and meditate, but there are deeper levels of connection and wisdom and insight and peace that we can experience if we spend more time going deeper: seeking God with all of our heart and surrendering our heart and lives to God.

So today we will continue with our series, and the topic is "Show Up Fully." So we're going to look at the the four things we can do to show up more fully in all areas of our lives.

The first thing is to **BE PRESENT**. Woody Allen once said 80 % of success is just showing up. And that sounds kind of silly, but the truth is: sometimes we don't show up. How many people have ever been in a meeting or a conversation with someone and your body was there, but your mind was somewhere else? Anybody ever have that? Anybody ever talking to somebody and you could tell they were so distracted; they weren't listening or paying attention to you at all? I mean, sometimes we are just not present. We don't show up.

You know, sometimes life is so painful and we are struggling so much, sometimes we just numb out or check out mentally, physically, emotionally. And we become what Og Mandino called "part of the living dead." That we might be breathing, but we're not living. We're not fully engaged and we're not fully present to ourselves and what we're feeling and going through ... and sometimes not present to others in our lives.

To show up fully, we have got to be present, which means we need to be awake, aware. We can call it mindfulness or "living in the now or in the present moment," but it's a hugely valuable and important thing. We hear more and more about the power and the importance of being mindful and living in the present moment.

Do you know studies show that, the more we practice mindfulness and bring ourselves back to the present, the more we reduce stress; the more we combat depression; the more we feel inner peace; the more we feel a level of calmness and self-control. Mental clarity or concentration improves; our emotional intelligence improves. And our ability to relate to ourselves and others with more kindness and compassion and understanding actually increases.

And I think we all know and have done practices of being present -- mindfulness practices -- of meditation, focusing on the breath. Or with prayer, seeking God and being still and knowing the presence of God. Or yoga or journaling. But they're all powerful and they're all valuable in making a difference in how we show up in our lives.

And the reason it's so important is because so much of our time in our lives we are thinking about the past: something that didn't work out; something we really disliked. And then the future: we're projecting anxiety and worry and fear that things won't work out. And often we are not right here and

right now in the present. And so we miss so much of our own power and our own inner peace and joy and the possibilities for greater things because we are not in the present.

So mindfulness brings us to the here and now, which is the most powerful and the most peaceful place we can be. It is where we feel grounded; where we feel aware; where we feel centered and present to ourselves and others.

And one of the most important things I think for us to do is to always turn back to give our attention to God, because God is right here and right now. And God is the fullness and the allness of that spirit and power in the present moment. And the more we turn back to God, the more we can stay present so we can show up fully.

Now, life is always going to distract us. We're always going to get pulled back to something that we regret or something that we didn't like, and we'll start worrying about something in the future. So this whole idea of being present is not something we reach once; it is something we've got to keep practicing and keep bringing ourselves back. Keep bringing ourselves back. You know, it is one of the challenging things.

And that's why using our breath is one of the most important tools we can have. Just take a deep breath; feel the air as it comes into your nose and out your mouth. Take a deep breath. And sometimes that can just help us calm down, focusing our attention on God. And that brings us back to the here and now" to be present and one with ourselves.

The very first and most important thing to show up fully is: we've got to be present. And keep coming back; keep practicing being present.

The second one is to **BE POSITIVE**.

You know, a couple was sitting in a dining corner at a railroad, and the husband was really in a foul mood. He was complaining about every little thing. He was being short and really rude and disrespectful to the waiter. And the wife leaned over to their table companion and apologized for the husband's bad behavior and said, *"You know, he really has a lot on his mind, because he is a manufacturer."* And the table companion was a businessman and was curious, and he said, *"So what does your husband manufacture?"* Without missing a beat, she said, *"Unhappiness."* [Laughs with congregation]

We are all naturally prone to negativity. We are all born with a negative bias, and sometimes we manufacture negativity. And we need to be careful, because if what we put out into the universe comes back to us, and we have a propensity for negativity, it means it takes extra work to stay positive. It takes extra work and intention for us to focus on the good; to see the opportunity and the possibilities and the blessings in all areas of our life.

Continuously training and conditioning our minds to see the positive and have a positive outlook is a tremendously important job on our spiritual path and in our lives.

Last week, or a couple of weeks ago, I think I mentioned an interview I saw where the psychologist and researcher was asked, *"What's the best thing we can do to make ourselves happier and improve the quality of our lives? Is it to add more positivity? or is it to reduce the amount of negativity?"* And he said the answer without a doubt is to reduce the amount of negativity in our lives.

You know, the best way to raise our vibration is to stop doing things that lower our vibration. And the "Three C's" is the thing we need to stop. And that is complaining, criticizing and condemning. So, we're in your life do you complain about? What in your life do you tend to criticize? And what in your life do you sometimes choose to condemn? These things do us more harm ... and just eliminating them actually raises the vibration and the level of positivity in our lives.

So besides reducing the negativity by stopping, complaining, and criticizing and condemning, another thing we could do to be positive and stay positive is use the power of affirmations. How many people use affirmations?

Affirmations are powerful! They condition our consciousness. I think they help raise our vibration, and they set up our mind to be able to attract more good. Because words have power; they have creative energy.

So everybody just affirm after me: *"I am positive. positive, peaceful, and prosperous."*

Together: [with congregants] *"I am positive, peaceful, and prosperous."* Let's just take a breath.

And now the next one: *"Good things are always happening to me and through me."*

Together: [with congregation] *"Good things are always happening to me and through me."*

"I am loving, caring, and kind to myself and others."

[With congregation:] *"I am loving, caring, and kind to myself and others."*

"I am wonderful, wealthy, and worthy."

[With congregation:] *"I am wonderful, wealthy, and worthy."*

"Each and every day, in each and every way, my life is getting better and better and better."

Together: [with congregation:] *"Each and every day, in each and every way, my life is getting better and better and better."*

And don't you feel a little more energy than you had before? That's the power of the word. You know, we create more positive mindsets, positive energy and positive vibration to attract more good in our lives.

Be present, be positive. And the third one is **BE PURPOSEFUL**. You know, when we are purposeful and live with intention, it helps bring out our best and it helps create the best life we can have. But the important thing about being purposeful and intentional is that we've got to be clear about what we want. We've got to be clear about the kind of life we want to live; about what we want to create; what we want to achieve or attract or experience or become; or the difference we want to make; or the way we want to show up in our lives.

Living with intention helps us focus our spiritual energy and not waste it. Sometimes living impulsively or casually or cautiously, or just existing, is not the way to live. Intention is about taking charge of our lives, and shaping and moving it and defining the things that we want to create and bring forth into our lives.

And I think intention is about making a conscious choice of how we utilize our two greatest resources, and that is time and that is energy. And to make the choice of: how are we going to invest and how do we want to spend that time and use that energy in things that bring us joy; things that have meaning for us and value for us so we can feel fulfilled in the life that we are living?

You know, to live with purpose is something that helps us in more areas than we realize. In my "Aging with Intention" class, one of the things that studies show is that, the more we have a sense of purpose in life, we tend to age better. Because the happier and more in focus that we are, and utilize our energy to those ends – when we wake up every day feeling a sense of purpose -- it actually has a great impact on our body and our attitude and our ability to manage the changes that come from aging.

You know, the thing about living with intention is: we think that living with intention is something complicated. You know, we think that it has to do with our job. And it just has to do with what has

meaning for you. What brings joy for you? And so, we could say that our purpose is to teach and not necessarily be a teacher. It is to uplift, and not necessarily to be, you know, a motivational speaker or minister. It is to make people smile, or feel joy; or to help people feel comforted or to heal. To work with animals or to work for justice and equality. There are all kinds of things that we can live with intention and fulfill our purpose ... and our purpose is defined as what has meaning for me.

You know, Viktor Frankl says people ask the question: what is the meaning of life? And he said, no; that's not the right question. The question is: what meaning do you give to life? What has meaning for you? That is the most important and valuable thing. Meaning and intention and purpose is not formal; it is meaningful and personal for ourselves.

Meaningful could be walking with our spouse every morning for a couple of miles, because that has a purpose and value to ourselves. It could be taking time every week to spend with our friends. It could be taking time to learn something new in our lives. Intention is about what is meaningful for ourselves and what has purpose for us.

This week, I had lunch with two individuals. Somebody won, in one of our raffles, a lunch with me three years ago. [Congregants laugh] Scheduling was a problem! [Laughs] And so we finally did it on Monday. One person is a member and he's retired. And the other person was 97 years old; his name is Bob. And I will tell you: as sharp as a tack, and as keen and bright as I've ever seen.

And so I'm chatting with him. First thing he wants to do; he said, *"Before we start, could I tell you a joke?"* And so, I'll tell you his joke next week. But anyway, he was just so full of life; so full of joy. And one thing he said to me; he said, *"Richard, I'm still here. So that means I still have a purpose."* And part of his purpose is just loving his family and enjoying his life. And, boy, is he doing a good job at it! That lunch was one of the highlights of my week, which was a pretty good week. Because this guy inspired me, because he is living with intention and purpose defined by himself. And you could see it radiate from his being. Because he feels that purpose, that you could just feel a positive energy from him.

One of the things about living with intention and purpose is that we tend to not be impacted as much by fear or indecision or procrastination. The more we live with purpose and intention, the more we become more true to ourselves; the more we tend to live more authentically; and the more we tend to live with more passion. Because it's chosen and guided by ourselves what is intentional and what is purposeful for ourselves.

And something I think that is important to do to be purposeful is: always keep checking in with yourself. Checking in with your heart; listening to your intuition; seeking God's guidance to show us what is the next thing -- are we meant to keep going on this path -- and to keep living as purposefully as we can.

So I ask you: Where in your life are you being called to be more purposeful in how you show up? In your relationship; in your work; for yourself; in your community; in your spiritual practice? How are you being called? And you know it's time for you to show up bigger in those areas with a greater sense of purpose?

And another thing is to describe: with you showing up big, what does that look like? With you showing up more fully, what qualities would you radiate and express that you aren't doing as much right now? Would it be expressing more joy or kindness or thoughtfulness or playfulness? Would it be expressing and embodying being a better listener? Having more compassion? Or being more grateful? Being more disciplined? Or being more patient?

You know, living on purpose -- living with intention -- really channels our spiritual energy. And it helps the health of our bodies and our minds and our spirits.

And the last one I want to talk about is to **BE PATIENT**. You know, sometimes we always want things and we want them now. We want things quickly, and if they don't come fast enough, we get impatient and frustrated and irritated and wondering, *"What is going on with this universe being so slow?"*

And the truth is: sometimes things take time. Sometimes healing takes time. Sometimes having a level of understanding takes time; the reason something happens in our lives; It takes time. How many people ever had a breakup or lost a job or something that brought you a lot of sadness and pain? And you felt like, *"I'm never going to get over this this will never get better."* And yet, six months later or a year later, or some other time you'll be like, *"Oh; that's why that happened!"* Or, *"Boy, that was a good thing that that ended, because look at all the good that it's brought."*

And sometimes we want to know quicker than we can know. But sometimes things need to unfold the way things need to unfold. And one of the things I think about being patient is a matter of trust: trust that God has a plan; trust that it will unfold. Trust that you'll know when you need to know when you need to know it. And can you be okay just being patient, not knowing? Can you just be patient in realizing there's uncertainty, and the mystery of life, and you just have to keep waiting?

In Isaiah it says, *"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint."* Being patient and being willing to wait and trust that the universe will unfold it and let you know when you need to know is a very valuable and important thing.

Let me give you another example of patience that I'm talking about. How many people have been on a spiritual path -- you want to be a greater light of love and kindness and joy, but you were cranky one day and you really snapped and were kind of rude to someone? Anybody ever have that experience? [Congregants laugh]

You know, the thing that we need to realize is that we need to be patient with ourselves. You know, we're going to miss the mark sometimes. Nobody's ever on their A game all the time. Sometimes we mess up. You know, the word sin means "to miss the mark." You can have a target -- being loving, being one with God -- and we miss the mark. And the word repent means "to rethink." Sometimes we miss the mark.

Anybody ever look back at something that happened, and how you acted, and you thought, *"Man, I could have said that better; I could have done a lot better in the way that I did that."*? We all have that! We all do! It's a part of the process of the unfolding of our souls. And so instead of beating ourselves up and shaming ourselves because we didn't get it right, and we didn't live up to the standard, just forgive ourselves and then rethink. Make a new choice. Remember; we have a choice! We could change that energy into something more positive by making a great choice.

Sometimes we have workouts where we're in the flow and we're feeling great. Sometimes we have workouts where things are lethargic and we're struggling. And I think both are part of the process to have breakthroughs, for us to get stronger. And the same is true -- not just in the gym -- but in our spiritual life and our relationships and all aspects of life for ourselves.

And again, being patient -- being willing to wait on God -- is an important way of how we show up in our best. And it's really, again, about trust. Do you trust that God loves you? Do you trust that God has a plan for you? Do you trust when Scripture says that all things work together for good for those who love God? Because if you trust that, we can absolutely be patient.

We are here to fulfill our spiritual potential. And what we put out absolutely comes back to us. So we need to be careful in the energy that we put out into the world. And it's important for us to be patient;

to be present; to be purposeful; and to be positive. Because God is calling us to be our best. The question is, are you willing to show up fully?

God bless you all, and we're going to use our affirmation cards now. It'll appear up on the screen. So let's say it together:

“The universe always reflects back the energy I express. I consciously put out positive intentions, good actions and loving energy into the world. I, [Richard Maraj], choose to be present, positive, purposeful and passionate in all that I do. I always SHOW UP FULLY.”

God bless you all! Alright! [Congregants applaud]

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